R. Smirke, del. W. Ellis sculp.

Plate II. Published as the Act directs by Harrison & Co. June 1, 1789.

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Plate 1.

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THE

SORROWS OF WERTER.

A

GERMAN STORY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GENUINE FRENCH EDITION

OF

MONSIEUR AUBRY,

BY

JOHN GIFFORD, ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

COME VIVER POSS'IO
SENZA LA VITA, O COME
DAR FIN, SENZA LA MORTE, AL MIO TORMENTO?

GUARINI.

LONDON:
Printed for HARRISON and Co. N° 18, Paternoster-Row.
M DCC LXXXIX.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

TRANSLATOR's PREFACE.

THE favourable reception which this work has experienced from the publick, will probably afford the moſt convincive proof of it's intrinſick merit. Dr. Johnſon has judiciouſly obſerved, that, 'By the common ſenſe of readers, uncorrupted with literary 'prejudices, after all the refinements of ſubtilty, and the dogma-'tiſm of learning, muſt be finally decided all claim to poetical 'honours.' And we think this remark might be extended, with equal juſtice, to every work of imagination. Some flagrant exceptions, in the preſent times, will indeed occur to every reader; but the paucity of examples to be adduced in ſupport of an oppoſite opinion, muſt rather tend to confirm than deſtroy the force of the obſervation.

Though the ſtory of Werter labours under peculiar diſadvantages, from a want of that diverſity of characters which is generally deemed eſſential to the ſucceſs of ſimilar productions, and from a barrenneſs of events, which keeps the mind invariably attached to one object; yet has it not failed to fix attention, and to ſecure applauſe. It's moral tendency has indeed been diſputed, through a miſconception which, ariſing from a fervent zeal for the enforcement of morality, is more than pardonable. That the ſame effect may be produced by different cauſes, will not admit of a doubt. Thus examples of virtue and vice, when reſpectively offered as objects of imitation and abhorrence, have equal claims to commendation, as they equally tend to promote the ſame ſalutary purpoſe. Where a vicious or immoral object is repreſented in thoſe warm and pleaſing colours which are calculated to create ſtrong ſentiments of compaſſion, we find the tranſition from that compaſſion to eſteem ſudden and almoſt imperceptible. In this caſe, indeed, it requires a certain portion of mental firmneſs to enforce a neceſſary diſcrimination; but the generality of mankind are endued with ſufficient reaſon to reſiſt the

the deluſions of paſſion: and when we conſider that the faculties of the ſoul, like thoſe of the body, acquire ſtrength from exertion, we ſhall not deem the efforts of the mind to obtain the neceſſary degree of firmneſs totally uſeleſs. Appeals to the heart, indeed, are ſeldom dangerous: the illuſions they create are tranſitory; their impreſſions too violent to be durable. The moſt ſerious objects of apprehenſion are thoſe laboured productions, whoſe ſyſtematick attacks are directed at the underſtanding: whoſe authors, by a ſhameful proſtitution of talents, ſeek to bewilder the mind in the mazes of ſophiſtry; and, by an affectation of candour, and profeſſions of liberal ſentiments, make inſidious attempts to ſap the fundamental principles of religion and morality.

Could the following work have been poſſibly conſtrued into an apology for ſuicide, the preſent edition of it would moſt certainly have never appeared; but an idea ſo erroneous could only be promulgated by thoſe who have attributed the ſentiments of the Hero to the Author himſelf. The arguments of Werter, too, are but ill calculated for the purpoſe of deception: not ſufficiently ſpecious to impoſe on the moſt ſuperficial mind, they can only be conſidered as the effuſions of ſenſibility; as the ebullitions of genius under the deſpotick influence of paſſion.

That the author of the work was innocent of the nefarious intentions that have been haſtily imputed to him, is evident from the following ſhort addreſs prefixed to the original edition—

'I have carefully collected every circumſtance I could diſcover 'that related to the ſtory of the unfortunate Werter; I now ſub-'mit them to your inſpection, from a conviction that they will 'prove acceptable to you. You will be compelled to admire his 'genius, to pity his diſpoſition, and to beſtow a tearful tribute 'of ſorrow on his unhappy fate.

'And thou, ſweet ſoul of ſenſibility! who art haſtening to the 'brink of the ſame precipice, *may this book prove thy friend*, 'if, by the rigour of thy deſtiny, or thine own imprudence, thou 'art deprived of a better!'

It is a rule in diſputation—evidently founded in reaſon—to allow each diſputant to be the ſole interpreter of his own arguments: and this indulgence ſhould certainly be extended to authors; for,

to

to accuſe a man of entertaining ſentiments which he openly diſavows, is moſt aſſuredly a flagrant violation of juſtice. But, unfortunately, many modern moraliſts, with more pretended zeal than real diſcernment, have cenſured thoſe authors as the apologiſts of ſuicide, whoſe works have ſupplied the moſt potent arguments for the ſuppreſſion of a crime at once ſo repugnant to religion and ſo pernicious to ſociety.

The following tranſlation is taken from the genuine French edition of Monſieur Aubry, which is indiſputably the beſt that has appeared. The letter prefixed to the work, at the ſame time that it conveys ſome idea of the ſtate of literature in Germany, will demonſtrate the extreme difficulties that a foreigner muſt inevitably experience in the ſtudy of the German language; and which render it almoſt impoſſible that he ſhould acquire a ſufficient knowledge of it to be able, without the aſſiſtance of a native, to give good tranſlations of the beſt German authors.

The Tranſlator having been careful, by occaſional deviations from the *letter*, effectually to preſerve the *ſpirit* of the original, preſumes that the preſent may claim a decided ſuperiority over all former editions.

LETTER

FROM A GERMAN OF LITERARY EMINENCE,

TO

MONSIEUR AUBRY,

ON HIS TRANSLATION OF THE SORROWS OF WERTER.

I Have received your acknowledgments, ir*, for the aſſiſtance I afforded you in *The Sorrows of Werter*, accompanied by a requeſt that I would ſupply you with ſome information on German literature, which you expreſs an intention of cultivating with diligence and aſſiduity. Believe me, Sir, this tranſlation has procured me a double portion of pleaſure; in affording me an opportunity of being uſeful to you, and at the ſame time of exhibiting to your country a

* This work having already attracted univerſal attention in England, under the title of "*The Sorrows of Werter*," the preſent Engliſh Tranſlator has taken the liberty to make the ſame deviation from the French, which is "*Les Paſſions du* "*Jeune Werter*," as his predeceſſor; though he is abundantly convinced that "*The* PASSIONS *of Werter*," would have been an infinitely more applicable as well as a more expreſſive title: ſince an idea of unmerited ſuffering is almoſt invariably attached to the word "*Sorrows*," which is likewiſe a term of confined import; whereas "*Paſſions*," being expreſſive of the general operations of the mind, is prodigiouſly comprehenſive. It is, perhaps, hazarding very little, to aſſert, that this injudicious title has greatly ſtrengthened, if not abſolutely given riſe to, the very popular error, that "*The Sorrows of Werter*," is an apology for ſuicide, though the Author moſt unqueſtionably meant that his work ſhould have a directly oppoſite tendency. If it be aſked—'Why, then, does this new 'Tranſlation appear under the ſame title?'—the anſwer is at hand. Firſt impreſſions are ſeldom or never to be totally effaced from the mind; and errors confirmed by habit not unfrequently acquire the force and attractions of truth: while the wiſdom that ſeeks to diſpel a favourite deluſion, though always deſerving of praiſe, oftener incurs contempt or deteſtation, than it ſecures either notice or reſpect. Though we know that the ancient Bacchus was a figure remarkable for elegance and grace, the million ſtill adhere to that uncouth form which preſcription has rendered reſpectable; were it poſſible to procure an authentick likeneſs of Homer, we ſhould not very readily reſign that buſt which we have been ſo long accuſtomed to regard as a correct repreſentation of his features; and had the efforts of hiſtorical ſcepticiſm been more ſucceſsful in eſtabliſhing the beauties of King Richard the Third, we ſhould ſtill have been unwilling to deprive that monarch of all thoſe deformities we have been taught to attach to his perſon.

German

German production that cannot fail to attract the applauſe of a nation ſo juſtly diſtinguiſhed for it's taſte, ſentiment, and ſcience. I have frequently regretted that I was not ſufficient maſter of the French language myſelf; and it has given me no ſmall uneaſineſs to find, that ſcarcely a ſingle Frenchman is ſufficiently verſed in the German to furniſh a good tranſlation of our beſt literary productions, and particularly of *The Sorrows of Werter*; as ſuch a tranſlation would inevitably tend to inſpire the French with a more favourable idea of my countrymen than they are now willing to entertain. Indeed, though we are anxious to acquire the approbation of foreigners in general, we know enough of French literature to give a decided preference to the applauſe of that country which has produced a Corneille, a Racine, a Moliere, a Voltaire, a Rouſſeau, and ſo many other men of genius whoſe talents have excited the admiration of all Europe.

You muſt own, that before you entered into the ſpirit of the ſtory which you have juſt tranſlated, you did not believe that the Germans had made ſo conſiderable a progreſs in literature; and you muſt excuſe me for obſerving to you, that the moſt cloſe and tedious application will ſtill be requiſite, before you can acquire a ſufficient knowledge of our language to read the *chef-d'œuvres* of Klopſtock, and other authors of eminence, with pleaſure and advantage. Whether the ſatisfaction to be derived from your ſtudies will be equivalent to the labour beſtowed on them, it is not for me to determine: I can only expreſs my concern, that no tranſlators are to be found poſſeſſed of an adequate knowledge of both languages, to give a good tranſlation of thoſe works which will form the chief objects of your literary purſuits; being impreſſed with a thorough conviction that they would experience that univerſal applauſe which they indiſputably merit.

I have already obſerved to you, that *The Sorrows of Werter* is not to be conſidered as the mere offspring of imagination. The ſon of the Abbe Jeruſalem, a celebrated theologiſt of Brunſwick, was the man, whoſe love for a lady of Wetzlar was attended with ſuch fatal conſequences. Goethe, the author of this ſtory, has always choſen his ſubjects, as well for novels as dramatick pieces, from ſcenes of real life; and this judicious preference has rendered his works more energetick and intereſting. It is a rule now generally admitted by our beſt writers, and I believe it to be founded in wiſdom—Is there any country, the hiſtory of which cannot furniſh events of ſufficient importance to be worthy of frequent repetition, and of being tranſmitted to poſterity, for the purpoſe of inſtruction, either as objects of imitation or abhorrence?—But to return to our ſubject. Our tranſlation proved a taſk of infinite difficulty: and although I can flatter myſelf that I poſſeſs a perfect knowledge of my own language, and am ſenſible that I ſpared no pains to make you comprehend the true force, delicacy, and extent of it's peculiar expreſſions, as well by having recourſe to other languages known to us both, as by the employment of circuitous deſcriptions, and the exertion of every art which my ingenuity could ſuggeſt; I muſt own to you that, in more paſſages than one, you have failed in your endeavours to do juſtice to the ideas of the author. But daily experience tends more firmly to convince me, that every language poſſeſſes it's peculiar beauties, which at once conſtitute the charm of the reader, and the rock on which every tranſlator muſt inevitably

evitably ſplit. In ſentimental works, or poetical productions, this difficulty will always occur. We ſhall never ſee a good tranſlation of the Henriad; and although I have myſelf tranſlated Voltaire's Ode on War, my vanity cannot induce me to change my opinion. The tranſlations which approach the neareſt to perfection, are certainly thoſe which two authors, who have a competent knowledge of the language of each other, and are perfect maſters of their own, execute in conjunction. Yours is of this claſs; but ſtill it is far from perfect; from whence I infer, that the rule, that a book cannot be truly good when it loſes in the tranſlation, is evidently falſe. In poetry and works of ſentiment, I will even venture to eſtabliſh, as an infallible principle, that a book is bad—that it neither can poſſeſs the merit of expreſſing with neatneſs the emotions of a perturbed mind, nor that warmth and energy of ſtyle which characterize true genius—*if* it does *not* loſe in the tranſlation.

The advantage which the German poſſeſſes over moſt other languages, in point of fertility, muſt render it extremely difficult to tranſlate. Such words as it did not originally poſſeſs, it has borrowed from it's neighbours: from whence it might be called a jack-daw, arrayed in the feathers of a peacock; but as it makes uſe of thoſe feathers to direct it's flight to Parnaſſus, the compariſon will no longer hold good.

Among other defects in our language, we Germans have no word to expreſs *genius:* this has afforded frequent opportunity to wits to exert their talents, by remarking that, as none of them poſſeſſed genius, they could have no poſſible uſe for the expreſſion; but Hermann*, the conqueror of Varus, was not leſs endued with that heavenly gift, than the bards of the firſt century, who tuned their harps amidſt the din of war. And, in the preſent age, let me aſk whether Leibnitz, Wolf, Klopſtock, Goethe, are devoid of genius? And whether the ſimple adoption of the word could be ſufficient to inſpire them with it?

The French entertain but very imperfect ideas of German literature. I have peruſed ſeveral periodical publications in which many of our works have been criticiſed, whoſe authors have ſurprized me by an acknowledgment that they were unacquainted with the language in which they were written.

There are three cauſes which, in general, concur to prevent foreigners from being able to form an adequate judgment of our literary compoſitions: the firſt proceeds from their neglect to ſtudy our language with attention; the ſecond is, becauſe our two principal authors, Klopſtock and Goethe, have revived many obſolete words, known only to the 'Lettered few;' and the third is that which ſubſiſts between all nations, and which reſults from the difference of manners, laws, and cuſtoms.

I muſt confeſs, that the French have ſufficient *chef-d'œuvres* of their own, to diſpenſe with tranſlations; but this advantage is a loſs to us,

* It is preſumed the author of this epiſtle muſt mean Arminius, a German chieftain who conquered Quintilius Varus, the Roman proconſul, in the year 9.—Hermann is the name of a celebrated mathematician of Bâle, who flouriſhed towards the commencement of the preſent century. *Engliſh Tranſlator.*

as it induces them to withold thoſe laurels which a knowledge of our merits would lead them to beſtow on us; and I am convinced that every nation, however enlightened, might profit by an acquaintance with it's neighbours. In the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth, the immenſe armies which that monarch led into the field, drew a great number of German officers into his ſervice: the magnificence of his court, the concourſe of foreigners who reſorted to it, the important negociations of his reign, operated as powerful inducements to all nations to ſtudy the French language; every young man of family, deſtined by the princes of Germany to fill the office of ambaſſador, being compelled to learn it; and many authors of eminence being anxious to partake of the encouragement beſtowed on literary merit by that great prince, it ſoon became the faſhionable ſtudy of the Germans; and, though they might not be able to pronounce it without a foreign accent, they learnt to underſtand it perfectly, and to write it with correctneſs. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes having occaſioned conſiderable emigrations from France, Germany was ſuddenly filled with maſters who diffuſed the French language over the whole empire. The motive which has ſince tended to ſupport it, and which has now rendered it an eſſential part of our education, is the continual ſource of inſtruction which it affords, from the great number of French authors of approved excellence. It is not, therefore, a diſpoſition inclined to ſervility, but rather a laudable thirſt after uſeful acquirements, which has urged the Germans to engage in the ſtudy of foreign languages: nor have their expectations been diſappointed; for, by enabling themſelves to inveſtigate the works of other nations, they have greatly accelerated the rapidity of their own literary progreſs, within the laſt century.

It is an idea generally received, though founded in error, that Gotſched was the father of German literature. Not any of our modern publications are ſuperior to the ſongs of our ancient bards; and if Gotſched has really been of ſervice to our literature, his ſole merit conſiſts in the formation of an excellent grammar, on the ſame plan as the Latin. In other reſpects, the poetical productions of this celebrated writer poſſeſs, indeed, the merit of correctneſs; but his numbers are cold and harſh; his dramatick pieces betray a want of genius, and a total ignorance of ſtage effect; and he was ſo ſtrongly attached to rules, that he entirely neglected every other requiſite in a dramatick compoſition, ſacrificing plot, character, and diction, to mere critical preciſion. Hagedorn is a poet of infinite merit; his verſes are leſs harſh and monotonous; and his epigrams have more point than all the works of Opitz, Canitz, and Amtor. Neukirch, who, among other productions, has given a tranſlation of Telemachus, and is held in the higheſt eſtimation by many of your journaliſts, is a moſt contemptible writer. Gellert, in imitation of La Fontaine and La Motte, has compoſed ſome fables in verſe, not wholly devoid of harmony: but fables, in general, appear to me uſeleſs productions, as they lay us under the neceſſity of teaching our children that beaſts are not endued with the gift of ſpeech; that there are no ſuch things as Fairies, Sylphs, and Gnomes; and that Telemachus, Minerva, Hercules, are imaginary beings; after we have been anxious to impreſs their infant minds with the belief that beaſts do ſpeak, and that all theſe offſprings of imagination have real exiſtence. Gellert, like the greateſt

greateſt part of modern fabuliſts, has fallen into the error of tranſlating Æſop and Phædrus. His other performances are all wretched; his letters inſipid and puerile; his dramatick pieces intolerably ſtupid; his novels fertile in events, but barren of intereſt, and deſtitute of probability; and his moral works, like an immenſe quantity of ſimilar productions, are mere compilations and repetitions. But, at this æra, Germany poſſeſſed Hagedorn, Dreyer, and Leſſing, whoſe epigrams are juſtly celebrated; and Geſſner, whoſe elegant paſtorals receive additional charms from the judicious union of ſtrong intereſt with affecting ſimplicity. This poet, diſdaining the ſervile example of his contemporaries, who were content with *copying pictures*, took Nature for his model and guide. Zacharie and Duſch produced ſome epick poems, equally diſtinguiſhed for the ſtrength and harmony of their numbers; but the light, airy, and pleaſing poetry of Gerſtenberg and Leſſing, compleated the expulſion of thoſe laboured rhymes, which tire the ear, and excite the moſt diſagreeable ſenſations; and from that time genius was deemed more eſſential than erudition in the formation of a poet. In the mean time, Klopſtock, the greateſt and moſt ſublime genius that Germany ever produced, publiſhed his immortal poem of *The Meſſiah*. This poem is one of thoſe extraordinary productions, which cannot be peruſed with pleaſure, nor duly comprehended, except the reader poſſeſſes ſome ſmall portion of the author's genius. It's publication formed an epoch in German literature, as it may juſtly be deemed a *chef-d'œuvre*, probably unequalled either by ancient or modern writers. A tranſlation of it into French has been attempted; but, I believe, it may be ranked amongſt thoſe works that cannot be tranſlated, becauſe it would require, as I have before obſerved, an author who was perfect maſter of both languages. There is no expreſſive word, no energetick phraſe, no elegance of diction, that our language could poſſibly ſupply, which this ſublime genius has not employed to do juſtice to his conceptions; and though Herculean labours are to be found in his poem, there is not a ſingle diſcordant ſound to offend the ear. Klopſtock, ſoon after, produced *The Battle of Arminius*; a drama in which the rules of the ſtage are indeed but little conſulted; yet, ſo replete with fire and genius, that the reader thinks himſelf tranſported to the firſt century, ſurrounded by vanquiſhed Romans and venerable Germans, bathed in the blood of their enemies; the Roman ſtandards captured; their priſoners chained at the foot of the altar of Woden, the martial god of the ancient Germans; that altar at which the bards performed their ſacrifices during the combat, and adorned the brows of the conquerors with wreaths of oak; from whence they ſung their warlike hymns, while the battle fiercely raged, to urge the wounded warrior to collect his ſmall remains of ſtrength, and make his laſt moments uſeful to his country, by gracing his own death with that of an enemy. Theſe are objects ever preſent to the imagination, by the manner, at once ſimple and ſublime, nervous and juſt, in which the author repreſents them to our mind.

At this period, too, Leſſing, Weiſſe, and Gerſtenberg, produced *Emilia Galotti*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Ougolino*, *Minna Von Barnhelm*, and ſeveral other dramatick pieces of infinite merit. Drandes, Geſſner, and ſome others, purſued the ſame path with equal ſucceſs. Wieland publiſhed his *Muſarion*, an exquiſite performance, in which nature is never

never ſacrificed to verſe, nor verſe to rhyme. The applauſe beſtowed on this author induced him to write too much, and upon ſubjects beyond his comprehenſion, which made him experience the utmoſt ſeverity of critical cenſure; but ſtill he has laid his country under a laſting obligation to him, by the production of a *chef-d'œuvre*. The author of the Literary Journal is evidently wrong, when he inſiſts on the inutility of training race-horſes, the neceſſity of which is daily demonſtrated in a country where horſe-racing forms the principal amuſement of the inhabitants. Nor is he more juſt in his obſervation, that a Norman horſe would equal an Arabian in ſpeed; but as he knows nothing of horſes, his miſtakes cannot excite our wonder. This author, however, notwithſtanding his ignorance in this particular, may poſſeſs great merit; and thus it is with Wieland, and with all thoſe who forget the anſwer of Apelles—'*Ne ſutor ultra crepidam.*'

I was very much ſurprized to find the following paſſage in a book lately publiſhed. 'I muſt here remark, that the Germans maintain a manifeſt ſuperiority over all the people of Europe, and perhaps even over the ancients, in this claſs of literature. (The Idyl.) *Inferior in every other claſs*, in that they are probably inimitable. They have ſelected the greateſt part of their ſubjects from the Holy Writ, and moſt of their ſhepherds exiſted before the Flood.' I aſked the author of this work if he underſtood German, and received an anſwer in the negative. I then aſked him, whether, through the means of tranſlations, he was acquainted with our beſt writers? he aſſured me that he was not. Is it poſſible that a man ſo incompetent to decide ſhould promulgate an opinion ſo deſpotick and peremptory? He muſt at leaſt be compelled to confeſs that he formed his judgment on that of others; in which caſe he ſhould have ſaid, that ſuch a perſon believes the Germans to be *inferior in every other claſs of literature*. That perſon would then have been applied to; and the probable reſult of the application would be, that he was as ignorant of the German as himſelf.

I am far from wiſhing to quote examples for the invidious purpoſe of detracting from the merit of another, or with the view of injuring the author I allude to in the opinion of the publick: I am only anxious to defend our literature from the attacks of it's adverſaries. I require that an author who judges with ſo much ſeverity ſhould deſcend to particulars; that he ſhould underſtand our language, and point out the peculiar defects which form the objects of his cenſure. If he had ſaid that the Germans had not ſo many excellent dramatick productions as the French; that they had never poſſeſſed a man of univerſal genius, like Voltaire, who excelled in every ſubject he wrote upon; or an author endued with that depth of knowledge, ſimplicity of ſtyle, and perſuaſive eloquence, that diſtinguiſhed the pen of Rouſſeau; that they had no Moliere; I ſhould have acknowledged the juſtice of his aſſertions. But I ſhould have oppoſed to him *The Meſſiah* of Klopſtock, not to be equalled by any nation in Europe; and his *Battle of Arminius*, which neither is, nor ought to be, conſidered as a dramatick piece, but is divided into ſcenes, which ſerve as frames for different pictures. I ſhould have reminded him of the *Muſarion* of Wieland; *Goetz von Berlichingen*, of Goethe; the light and pleaſing poetical productions

ductions of Leſſing, Gerſtenberg, and Hagedorn; and the romances entitled, *The Magiſter Sebaldus Notkanker*, and *Miſs Sarah Sampſon*; which poſſeſs the merit of originality, and repreſent nature in thoſe ſtrong expreſſive colours, that ſpeak to the heart, and raiſe the frequent bluſh on the very cheek of vanity.

Pope Ganganelli, or the Author of his Letters, has ſpoken of our poetry with leſs ſeverity; and, in my opinion, with a greater regard to juſtice; at leaſt, I may ſafely affirm, that to be able to form a competent judgment of the poetry of a nation, a knowledge of the language is eſſentially requiſite. The beauties of verſe muſt inevitably ſuffer by tranſlation; and though ſome few caſes may poſſibly be adduced where the tranſlator has equalled the original, they will not detract from the juſtice of my obſervation. I have never yet ſeen any tranſlation of Horace's *Lyric Ode to Licinius*, of the tragedies of *Zara* or *Mahomet*, or the poem of the *Meſſiah*, which has pleaſed me; of the laſt, I apprehend I never ſhall ſee one.

Do not cenſure me for placing Voltaire, Horace, and Klopſtock, in the ſame claſs. Let not our juſt reſpect for the ancients prevent us from doing juſtice to the moderns. Why, in an enlightened age, ſhould not the reign of Lewis prove as fertile in talents as that of Auguſtus? I believe Newton and Waller to have excelled Archimedes and Pythagoras; that Boerhaave was ſuperior to Hippocrates, Pigal but little inferior to Praxiteles, and Correggio at leaſt equal to Apelles. Let us reject with ſcorn that ſervile prejudice which tends to inculcate the belief that the ancients are our ſuperiors, merely becauſe they are ancients, and becauſe we are their pupils. Have not Pigal, Correggio, Michael Angelo, Corneille, Racine, and Moliere, far ſurpaſſed their maſters? Men of ſuperior minds extend their views, without fear or prejudice, to the utmoſt verge of nature, to the ſummit of art; and, without deſpairing to give a perfect repreſentation of the one, or of attaining the other, fly on the wings of Genius to the Parnaſſian Mount, and bear off the laurel as their lawful prize.

Klopſtock and Goethe have each of them formed an epoch in our literary hiſtory, by the revival of a great number of ancient words peculiarly adapted to their different productions. Thoſe of the firſt are heroick: thoſe of the laſt chiefly conſiſt of plays and novels; in which, from his frequent introduction of domeſtick ſcenes, he found it neceſſary to revive many of thoſe familiar expreſſions which are continually employed in common life. Our language has thus been enriched by the inheritance of our anceſtors, by the adoption of obſolete terms; and this revolution has been ſufficiently important to render it abſolutely neceſſary for a foreigner who is anxious to acquire a competent knowledge of the German, to have recourſe to a literary preceptor. Of the juſtice of this aſſertion you muſt be perfectly convinced by the tranſlation of Werter. How many words, how many phraſes, of ſingular beauty and force, did you meet with, which you in vain ſought for in all the beſt dictionaries?

As to the difference produced in the literature of different countries, by religion, climate, and manners, I believe there is no one, who has paid the ſmalleſt attention to the influence of thoſe powerful efficients on the human mind, can entertain the leaſt doubt of it's exiſtence. Let me aſk if the tragedy of *Brutus*, or Moliere's excellent comedy of the

Tartuffe, would ſucceed, or even be heard with patience, in China? Are the works of Shakeſpeare eſteemed in France? Would Holberg, who repreſents vice as it exiſts but in his own nation, be intelligible at Paris? Even *Don Quixote* would be deemed a ſtupid romance, in a country where chivalry was never known.

It cannot be denied that the inhabitants of ſome countries are gay, and of others ſerious. There are nations, the minds of whoſe inhabitants are continually tinged with melancholy: from hence we may naturally conclude, that thoſe light, airy compoſitions, which are mere works of imagination, would become objects of eſteem in France, of indifference in Germany, and of deteſtation in England. Bull-baiting, which forms the principal amuſement of the people of Andaluſia and Caſtile, is viewed with diſguſt on the oppoſite ſide of the Pyrenees; and the prize-fighters, ſo recently aboliſhed in England, would have been loaded with irons at Cang-'l ong.

It is only paſtoral poetry, morality—when exempt from ſcholaſtick refinement—and a repreſentation of the beauties of nature, which, being objects of general contemplation, can command univerſal admiration If a work attacks any religious prejudice, eſtabliſhed cuſtom, or poſitive law, of a particular people, that people will think it deteſtable; but their cenſure will not prevent it from being applauded in the country that produced it. And if it be true that theſe ſame cauſes render people more active or indolent, more cruel or humane, more gloomy or gay, more ſimple or refined; the repreſentations of ſorrow, weakneſs, activity, gaiety, and heroiſm, ought to poſſeſs certain gradations, which would render the ſame thing good, or analogous to the character of one nation; and bad, or repugnant to the character of another.

Mathematical truths are the only ones that hold good in every climate: hence thoſe eternal diſputes on the beauties of a dramatick production, which is applauded in one place, and condemned in another. There are, indeed, certain points on which good ſenſe is alone requiſite to produce an unity of opinion. Some things will be univerſally deſpiſed, others univerſally admired; from whence it will follow, that if Shakeſpeare is eſteemed by the Engliſh, and cenſured by the French, he is good in England, and bad in France; and not that he is intrinſically bad*.

It is the ſame with natural as with refined taſte. When I ſee a Portugueſe diſtort his features at the repreſentation of our comedy of '*The Jews*,' while a German is beſtowing on it the loudeſt marks of applauſe; it brings to my ſight a Swiſs, whoſe ſole nourithment is milk and fruit, expreſſing his diſguſt at the taſte of Spaniſh pepper, or Egyptian onions: and if I ſee two men feaſting on a diſh which is diſguſting to a third, I do not take upon me to aſſert that the third perſon is poſſeſſed of a falſe taſte; I content myſelf with obſerving, that he has not the ſame taſte as the others. For the ſame reaſon,

* This author probably formed his opinion of the Engliſh drama from the inſtructions of Voltaire, who underſtood barely ſufficient of our language to diſcover that the works of Shakeſpeare would prove an inexhauſtible ſource to the foreign plagiariſt; and who was poſſeſſed of ſufficient learning to magnify the deformities of our inimitable bard to his credulous countrymen, for the inſidious purpoſe of ſecuring his plagiariſms from detection. *E. T.*

learn

learn not to beſtow indiſcriminate cenſure on our dramatick pieces, becauſe they do not contain the ſame number of acts as your own, or becauſe the three unities are not ſtrictly obſerved. If the piece is founded in reaſon, the plot intereſting and natural, the denoüement unexpected, and the characters juſt; you may ſay that a neglect to preſerve the unities, and the introduction of ſcenes repugnant to your manners, render it unfit for repreſentation on your ſtage, but you cannot from thence conclude that it is really bad.

The character of the Germans bearing a ſtronger reſemblance to the Engliſh than to the French, occaſions the works of Shakeſpeare to be received with pleaſure at Berlin; while *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, *Le Glorieux*, or *Le Joueur*, are held in no eſtimation, becauſe that deſcription of men from which the principal characters in thoſe pieces are taken are very different beings there to what they are with you. If our gamblers are addicted to ſwearing and ſmoaking, we muſt repreſent them on the ſtage ſuch as they are at Berlin, and not as the gamblers of Paris; otherwiſe the illuſion would be deſtroyed, and the effect entirely loſt.

Monſieur de Cailhava, who probably approaches nearer to Moliere than any of his rivals, put the following expreſſion in the mouth of the principal egotiſt in his new production—'At the age of thirty, to 'have both a father and a mother living! To have nothing that I can 'call my own!—Well! Let them live! I hope they may!' The cenſure beſtowed on this paſſage, on account of it's atrociouſneſs, induced the author to eraſe it. I will not here enquire whether it be more abominable to hear this infamous expreſſion from the mouth of an infamous character, than to ſee a ſon aſſaſſinate his mother, as in the tragedy of *Electra*; I ſhall only obſerve, that this character would inevitably pleaſe in Germany, becauſe it is founded in nature. I have heard a thouſand young men complain of the length of their parents lives: they were monſters, I grant; but we repreſent theſe monſters on the ſtage for the purpoſe of expoſing them to publick indignation; and to correct thoſe whoſe crimes, though atrocious, are not cognizable by law. In China, indeed, where a ſon is ever ſubject to the will of his father, and filial affection conſtitutes the firſt duty of religion, this paſſage would be inſupportable; but what concluſion can we draw from thence? At moſt, only that no ſuch monſters exiſt in China as thoſe with which Europe is infeſted: but a Chineſe, who ſhould meet with them in our ſocieties, would be the firſt to adviſe us to expoſe them to diſgrace and ridicule. Are no ſuch monſters, then, to be found in France, as well as in other European countries? I rather think that, if Moliere had compoſed the character of an egotiſt, he would have given him the ſame ſentiments as Monſieur de Cailhava. Since, therefore, a piece may be deemed a faithful copy of nature in one country, and wholly unnatural in another, I am fully convinced that climate, laws, manners, and religion, have a decided influence on the *belles-lettres*.

By entering into this long detail, which may probably have appeared tedious to you, I had no intent to perſuade you that our literature enjoyed the ſmalleſt pre-eminence over that of other nations; I was only anxious to convince you that we have ſome pretenſions to literary diſtinction, that our progreſs has been rapid and ſucceſsful,

and that the publick only refuſe to do us juſtice from ignorance of our merit.

If you wiſh to accuſtom yourſelf to our poetry, begin with the *Kleinigkeiten* of Leſſing, the *Tandelein* of Gerſtenberg, and the works of Hagedorn; then read Wieland. And, in order to accuſtom yourſelf, by degrees, to the ſublime and heroick ſtyle of Klopſtock, peruſe the works of Father Denys; then read Klopſtock himſelf, and make uſe of me as your dictionary. I ſhould adviſe you to read his *Battle of Arminius* before his *Meſſiah*; as an acquaintance with his proſe will render his poetry more familiar to you. Goethe, whoſe firſt production was a maſter-piece, entitled *Gotzvon Berlichingen*—vainly attacked by certain libelliſts of Berlin, who appear anxious to reſtrain the ſallies of genius within the limits of pedantry—will be eaſily underſtood, if you firſt read ſome of the tranſlations from Shakeſpeare, and his own *Clavigo*, a drama in which Monſieur de Beaumarchais forms one of the principal characters. The work that you have tranſlated will ſufficiently familiarize you with the ſtyle of this author.

The collection entitled *The German Theatre* contains many wretched pieces unworthy your attention. All our tranſlations of your beſt French pieces, even thoſe of Sclegel, are wretched mutilations, which make me tremble for the honour of my country. Gellert and Gotſched, neither of whom poſſeſſed the ſmalleſt knowledge of ſtage effect, have produced ſome execrable performances. Apply yourſelf to Brandes, Weiſſe, Gerſtenberg, and Leſſing, who are our beſt authors. Prefer Geſner and Schmit for paſtoral poetry: their works have been univerſally admired, even by foreigners; and nature will be the only dictionary you will need to render them intelligible.

If you are inclined to read the beſt journal in our language, compoſed by a man of extraordinary talents, read the *Deutſche Cronick* of Schubert, publiſhed at Ulm in Suabia. If you will take the trouble to tranſlate it, we ſhall then be indebted to you for giving a perfect model of German literature to a nation whoſe talents we admire; whoſe reputation we are anxious to emulate; and whom we wiſh to perſuade, that it is impoſſible to remain in the vicinity of ſo ardent a flame without being enlightened by it's rays.

Theſe remarks are proportioned to the extent of a letter; and you muſt not ſuppoſe that we have no good authors but thoſe I have mentioned, or that we are without periodical publications appropriated to the different ſciences. There are ſocieties of literati for the inveſtigation of every branch of knowledge, whoſe reſpective members confine their criticiſms to the particular ſcience ſubmitted to their judgment. If they are lawyers, they do not preſume to decide on the merits of a treatiſe on horſes: they do not pretend to condemn the literary talents of a nation, if ignorant of it's language; nor, if miniſters of religion, do they venture to indulge themſelves in political diſcuſſions. A Polyhiſtor, who lays claim to univerſal knowledge, quotes authorities from his bookſeller's catalogue, and forms his judgment of a work from the name of it's author, is a being that in Germany would become an object of general contempt. The rule—'*Ne ſutor ultra crepidam*,' ſhould be the motto of thoſe reviewers who, elated with ſucceſs, are too apt to ſubſtitute invective for ſatire; and, by a pitiful attempt to diſplay their wit, to deſcend from the critick to the libeller.

We

We have likewiſe our aſtronomers, mathematicians, and hiſtorians. But the limits of a letter are too confined, and my talents too feeble, to lead you through the various paths of ſcience. I conclude with a ſincere wiſh that your tranſlation may meet with a favourable reception in France; and by aſſuring you, that I ſhall eſteem myſelf amply rewarded for any aſſiſtance I may have afforded you, by the pleaſure I experience in contributing to refute the unfavourable opinion which your nation has hitherto entertained of our literary talents.

THE

THE

SORROWS OF WERTER.

VOLUME THE FIRST.

LETTER I.

MAY 4, 1770.

I Am happy that I left you. —Yes, my friend, my ſeparation from you, the companion of my early days, the choſen friend of my boſom, can now afford me conſolation. Alas! how inexplicable is the human heart!—But you, who know the ſincerity of my friendſhip, will pardon my infatuation. Thoſe connections on which I had founded my hopes of happineſs, appear to have been deſtined by fate to prove the ſource of my miſery. Poor Leonora!—Yet am I to blame, becauſe nature has endued her with a heart too ſuſceptible of tender impreſſions? If, while paying a juſt tribute of admiration to the ſuperlative charms of her ſiſter, I undeſignedly awakened the ſoft embers of paſſion in her gentle boſom, am I to be cenſured for the effects of her ſenſibility?—Surely not. Still there is a medium, between abſolute guilt, and perfect innocence. How often have you ſeen me amuſed by thoſe genuine effuſions of nature, which afforded us ſubject for mirth, when they ſhould have inſpired us with far different ſentiments! Have I not—But why ſhould I be thus anxious to find cauſes for reproach, when I ſtand in ſo much need of conſolation? Be not uneaſy, my friend; I will endeavour to ſubdue this wayward diſpoſition, nor longer continue to enhance the miſeries inſeparable from humanity by the torments of retroſpection, but will enjoy the preſent, and bury the paſt in oblivion. Your obſervation is certainly juſt —our portion of ſorrow would experience conſiderable diminution, were we as anxious to ſuſtain with fortitude the inflictions of the moment, as we are ingenious in harraſſing our minds with the painful recollection of paſt ſufferings.

Pray tell my mother that I ſhall exert all my ſkill in the execution of her commiſſion, and will let her know the reſult as ſoon as poſſible. I have ſeen my aunt. She is by no means that fury ſhe was repreſented to me. She is paſſionate, indeed; but the excellence of her heart counterbalances the violence of her temper. I explained to her the ideas of my mother relative to that part of her portion which ſhe conceives to be unjuſtly detained: ſhe liſtened to me with patience; ſhewed me on what her own claims were founded; and told me her motives for with-holding it, and the conditions on which ſhe is willing to give up even more than we require. But no more of this; only tell my mother that ſhe need give herſelf no farther uneaſineſs on the ſubject; it will be ſettled agreeably to her wiſhes. In the tranſaction of this buſineſs, I have had occaſion to obſerve that neglect and miſunderſtanding create more trouble and anxiety in the world than diſhoneſty and malevolence; at leaſt, the former are more frequent.

My preſent ſituation is delightful. The ſolitude of this heavenly country operates as a balm to my wounded heart, which acquires freſh warmth and courage from the invigorating charms of the ſeaſon,

ſeaſon. Every tree, every hedge, is decked in it's vernal attire; and the choiceſt flowers impregnate the ambient air with the richeſt perfumes of nature. The town itſelf is gloomy and diſagreeable, but the environs are beautiful. On one of the neighbouring hills, which commands an extenſive view of thoſe delightful vallies that afford ſo pleaſing a variety to our proſpect, the late Count M—— made a garden. It is laid out in that ſtyle of ſimplicity, which plainly demonſtrates that the profeſſional ſkill of the gardener has been corrected by the native taſte of a man of feeling and genius, more ſtudious to conſult his own enjoyment than the rules of art. I have already beſtowed ſome tears on the memory of it's departed poſſeſſor, in an arbour, now falling to ruins, that was formerly the favourite retreat of his leiſure hours, and which I now claim as my own. Indeed, I expect ſoon to be maſter of the whole garden; for I have effectually ſecured the gardener in my intereſt, and ſhall be careful not to loſe his favour ſo long as I have the means of preſerving it.

LETTER II.

MAY 10.

MY mind is calm and ſerene, like the mild mornings of the ſpring, whoſe charms fill my ſoul with pleaſure inexpreſſible. The ſolitude that reigns in this delicious ſpot, imparts the pureſt joy to hearts like mine. My happineſs is ſo perfect, and all my ideas are ſo abſorbed in the ſimple enjoyment of conſcious exiſtence, that I can find no time for the exertion of my talents. I am unable to trace a ſingle ſketch; my pallet and pencil lie neglected, and yet never was I a greater proficient in the art than at this moment. Now the denſe vapours of the early morn conceal yon verdant valley from my ſight; and now the riſing ſun exhales the glittering dew, and plays upon the thick foliage that o'er-canopies my head; while here and there ſome feeble rays pierce through my favourite alcove, chequering the gloomy ſhade with glimmering light. Now, ſtretched on the long graſs, near the moſs-grown margin of a murmuring ſtream, I contemplate, with admiration, the varied beauties of the vegetable world, and become familiar with the myriads of little inſects that ſurround me. In the contemplation of theſe objects, I feel myſelf inſpired by the preſence of that Omnipotent Being who, with his fiat, formed and peopled the univerſe; whoſe breath ſupports us, and ſupplies that eternal ſource of enjoyment which endears exiſtence to his creatures. My eyes become dim; my ſenſes are confuſed: the heavens, the earth, the infinite extent of ſpace, all take poſſeſſion of my mind, and abſorb it's faculties, like the image of a beloved miſtreſs. Oh! that I were endued with ſufficient powers of expreſſion to deſcribe theſe vaſt conceptions, with the ſame warmth, the ſame divine energy, that they are impreſſed on my ſoul!—But their aſtoniſhing ſublimity overcomes me, and I am dead to all ſenſations, but thoſe of gratitude and wonder!

LETTER III.

MAY 12.

I Know not whether this country be inhabited by ſupernatural beings, or whether ſome heavenly deluſion has taken poſſeſſion of my ſenſes, and given to every ſurrounding ſcene the appearance of a terreſtrial paradiſe. At a ſhort diſtance from the town is a ſpring, to which I am fixed by ſome magick power, like Meluſina† and her ſiſters. It is ſituated at the foot of a ſmall hill, where there is a flight of about twenty ſteps that lead to a cavern, at whoſe extremity the liquid chryſtal gently drops from a vein of white marble. The ruſtick wall which ſurrounds this grotto, the lofty trees that overſhadow it, the refreſhing coolneſs of the place, all tend to inſpire ſentiments of veneration mingled with a kind of religious horror. Not a day paſſes but I devote an hour to this enchanted ſpot. Thither the young maidens of the town reſort for water.—Uſeful occupation; which,

† Meluſina, who was deſcended from the family of Luſignan, was the heroine of numerous tales. They ſay that this Fairy, half a woman and half a ſerpent, built the caſtle of Luſignan, which was deemed impregnable; and that ſhe never failed to ſhew herſelf on the great tower when any one of the family was about to die.

Moreri's Dictionary, Art. Luſignan.

though

though now deſtined ſolely to the daughters of Servitude, was, in the times of primitive innocence and ſimplicity, not diſdained by the children of monarchs. The days of the patriarchs preſent themſelves to my imagination; I ſee thoſe venerable fathers forming connections, and betrothing their children in marriage, by the ſide of a fountain; while the guardian Genii of the Spring ſhed their ſalutary influence around them.

The man who, in a ſimilar ſituation, does not experience the ſame ſenſations, has never yet fully enjoyed the pleaſure of repoſing on the margin of a clear ſpring, after a day's walk in the ſcorching heats of ſummer.

LETTER IV.

MAY 13.

I Thank you for your offer to ſend me my books; but, for Heaven's ſake, my friend, let them remain where they are, and ſuffer me to enjoy ſome moments of repoſe. I will no longer ſubmit myſelf to the conduct of guides who, inſtead of repreſſing the ardour of paſſion, only add fuel to fire. My heart is a torrent, the impetuoſity of which I am unable to reſtrain: I only want, therefore, thoſe ſoothing ſtrains that can lull it to reſt; and theſe Homer ſupplies in abundance. How often have I applied to him for comfort! How often, by his harmonious numbers, have I ſought to cool the raging blood that ſeemed boiling within my veins!—But it is not to you I need explain the feelings of my heart: you have too often experienced it's keen ſuſceptibility; too often witneſſed my ſudden tranſitions from violent ſorrow to immoderate joy, from the deep gloom of pleaſing melancholly to the impetuous ſallies of outrageous paſſion! My heart is as wayward as a ſick child, whoſe every caprice muſt be complied with.—But let not this confeſſion tranſpire; the world would deem it criminal.

LETTER V.

MAY 15.

I Have already become the favourite of the common people here, and particularly of the children. When I firſt took notice of them, and queſtioned them on different ſubjects, I received ſuch rough anſwers as convinced me that they thought I meant to inſult them. I would not, however, ſuffer myſelf to be diſcouraged, but perſiſted in my deſign; and found the truth of an obſervation, which I had frequently made before—That people of exalted rank are anxious to keep their inferiors at a diſdainful diſtance, leſt their dignity ſhould ſuffer by approaching them: and that there are coxcombs in the world, who evince their pretenſions to wit by urging their inferiors to an intercourſe of familiarity, for the mere purpoſe of expoſing them to ridicule and contempt. I know that we neither are, nor can be, all placed on a footing of equality; yet I cannot but think, that the man who, to enſure reſpect from the people, deems it neceſſary to keep them at a humble diſtance, ſhould be conſidered as a coward, who conceals himſelf from his adverſary from a conſciouſneſs of his own imbecillity.

When I was laſt at my favourite fountain, I found a young woman on the ſteps, with her pail ſtanding by her, waiting for the aſſiſtance of ſome friendly hand to place it on her head. I approached her. 'Shall I aſſiſt you, my 'dear?'—'Oh, Sir!' anſwered ſhe, bluſhing. 'Come, no ceremony be-'tween friends.' So ſaying, I lifted up her pail. She gave me a look of thanks, and mounted the ſteps.

LETTER VI.

MAY 17.

I Have contracted a numerous acquaintance, but have not yet been able to meet with any kind of ſociety. The inhabitants of this city muſt certainly ſee ſomething extraordinary in me; for I never ſtir from home, but I am ſurrounded by crowds of them; and they are ſo earneſt in their profeſſions of eſteem, that I always part from them with regret. If you wiſh to know what ſort of people they are, I muſt tell you that the men are the ſame here as they are every where elſe. There is a wonderful uniformity in the human ſpecies: the generality of them are obliged to work the greateſt part of the day, in order to gain a ſubſiſtence; and the few leiſure hours that remain appear ſo tedious and irkſome, that their ut-

moſt ingenuity is exerted to find means of employment. Such is the lot of man! There is, however, another claſs of them, in whoſe company I find frequent amuſement, and with whom I ſometimes partake of thoſe innocent recreations which are ſtill capable of affording gratification to the human mind. A chearful repaſt, where honeſt mirth is excited by frankneſs that ſcorns diſguiſe, and an openneſs of heart that riſes ſuperior to ſuſpicion or miſtruſt; a ball, a promenade, and other ſocial amuſements; have the moſt pleaſing effect on my diſpoſition. But if, in thoſe moments of enjoyment, the idea that I poſſeſs qualities which are condemned to lie dormant, and which I am even compelled to conceal with the utmoſt caution, occurs to me, my pleaſure is immediately interrupted. Alas! my ſpirits ſink beneath the melancholy reflection! And yet, my friend, where is the intelligent being who is not ſubject to miſconception?

Ah! why is the friend of my youth loſt to me for ever? Why was I deſtined to know her? I might anſwer—'Werter, 'thou art ſeeking what is not to be found 'in this ſublunary world.' But I had found her; I had found that incomparable heart, that exalted mind, in whoſe preſence I appeared ſuperior to myſelf, becauſe all my faculties were in motion; every power of my ſoul was exerted; and, like a flower diſcloſing it's beauties to the ſun, the ſentiments of generoſity which nature had implanted in my boſom, were all unfolded. Our connection was marked by one continued interchange of ſentiments the moſt refined, by the pureſt effuſions of genius. And now, alas! ſhe is gone before me to the ſilent grave, and has left me to deplore her loſs. Never ſhall her dear image be eraſed from my memory; never ſhall I forget that noble ſtrength of mind, that more than human courage, with which ſhe bore the painful inflictions of Providence!

A few days ago I met with a Mr. V. an accompliſhed young man, with a very prepoſſeſſing countenance. He has juſt left the univerſity; and though he does not think himſelf a perfect ſcholar, he believes that he poſſeſſes more knowledge than moſt men. He appears, however, to be a man of greater application than genius. As ſoon as he was informed that I underſtood Greek, and had ſome knowledge of drawing—two extraordinary accompliſhments in this country—he paid me a formal viſit, for the purpoſe of diſplaying his erudition: and indeed he ſoon exhauſted his whole ſtock of literature, from Batteux to Wood, from De Piles to Winkelman. He aſſured me that he had read all the firſt part of Sultzer's Theory; and had in his poſſeſſion an original manuſcript of De Heyn on the Study of the Antique. Though his harangue, you may be ſure, was not very fertile in amuſement, I ſuffered him to compleat it.

I have alſo formed an acquaintance with a very worthy man, who acts as ſteward to the Prince. His manners are marked with that frankneſs of heart and manly firmneſs, that cannot fail to conciliate eſteem. I am told that it is a moſt affecting ſight to ſee this worthy father ſurrounded by his numerous offſpring. He has nine children, and his eldeſt daughter is talked of as an object of general admiration. I have received a general invitation from him, and purpoſe to embrace an early opportunity of paying my firſt viſit. He lives at a hunting-box belonging to the Prince, which is ſituated about a league and a half from the town. Thither he obtained permiſſion to retire after the death of his wife, being unable to enjoy the ſmalleſt comfort or repoſe in a houſe that continually ſupplied him with objects of ſorrow and regret, by reminding him of the ſevere loſs he has ſuſtained.

Beſides theſe acquaintances, I have met with ſeveral original characters, or rather caricatures, who diſguſt you with their civilities, and whoſe eternal profeſſions of friendſhip are really inſupportable.

Adieu. As this letter is wholly hiſtorical, it will certainly pleaſe you.

LETTER VII.

MAY 22.

IT has often been obſerved, that life is but a dream; and the idea is ever preſent to my mind. When I contemplate the circumſcribed limits which confine all the active and ſpeculative faculties of man; when I ſee that all his powers tend merely to the gratification of his wants, which in themſelves have no other end than to prolong a miſerable exiſtence;

exiſtence; that our tranquillity, on certain ſubjects of our enquiries, proceeds not from reaſon, but from a blind reſignation, which leads us to ſeek for amuſement in painting a thouſand whimſical figures, and flattering objects, on the walls of our terreſtrial priſon: when theſe conſiderations occur to me, I am compelled to be ſilent. I then examine my own mind, and there diſcover a new creation; but in that, as in the world we inhabit, there is leſs of reality than of vague preſage and undefined deſires. Theſe chimeras of my imagination, however, ſoon diſappear, when I return, with a ſmile, to my original dream.

It is a point on which all pedants agree, that children are ignorant of the primary motive by which their will is influenced: but that men ſtalk about the globe with the ſame unſteady pace as a child; that, like children, they neither know from whence they came, nor whither they are bound; acting with the ſame ignorance of their motives, and guided, like them, by fantaſtical toys, or inſtruments of correction; is what no one is willing to acknowledge; and yet, to me, there is nothing more evident.

I make no ſcruple to confeſs, for I know your opinion on the ſubject, that the moſt happy beings are thoſe who, like children, look not beyond the wants of the moment; amuſe themſelves with a doll; walk, with impatience, round the drawer where mamma keeps the ſugar-plums; and when they have attained the object of their deſires, devour it with avidity, and cry for more. Theſe, ſurely, muſt be happy! Happy, alſo, are they who, dignifying their frivolous employments, or even the very effects of their paſſions, with the moſt pompous titles, repreſent them as important operations, ſolely undertaken for the welfare and happineſs of mankind. But the man who, in all humility of heart, perceives the vanity of theſe things; who ſees with what pleaſure the happy cit tranſforms his little garden into a paradiſe; and with what eager aſſiduity the child of misfortune, though bending beneath the weight of his burden, purſues his deſtined way —yes, he too may enjoy tranquillity; he creates a world of his own, and is alſo happy becauſe he is a man. However circumſcribed the ſphere in which he is deſtined to move, the pleaſing idea of liberty is deeply engraved on his heart, and makes him feel that he can burſt the walls of his priſon whenever confinement ſhall become inſupportable.

LETTER VIII.

MAY 26.

YOU have long been acquainted with my partiality for particular ſpots; you know the preference I give to ſolitary ſcenes, where I can paſs my leiſure hours in tranquil meditation. I have juſt diſcovered a little ſpot that will exactly ſuit me.

About a league from the town is a place called Walheim, moſt delightfully ſituated on the declivity of a hill: the path that leads to it commands an extenſive view of the neighbouring plains. In this village lives a chearful old woman, who gains a ſcanty ſubſiſtence by ſelling wine, beer, and coffee. But, what pleaſe me better than either the fine proſpect or agreeable hoſteſs, are two lime-trees, the wide-ſpreading branches of which o'erſhade a little green before the church, that is ſurrounded by barns and ruſtick habitations. I have had no ſmall difficulty to find a place at once ſo pleaſant and retired: I ſend a chair and table from my landlady's, and there drink my coffee, and read Homer. I firſt diſcovered this ſpot by chance, in one of my afternoon rambles: the day was fine, and all the peaſants being at work in the fields, the place was entirely deſerted, except by a little boy about four years old, who was ſitting on the ground with a child of ſix months between his knees, whoſe head reclined on his boſom. Notwithſtanding the vivacity of his fine black eyes which ſtrayed round the green, he ſat perfectly ſtill, as if fearful to diſturb his little charge. Delighted with the ſight, I placed myſelf on a plough that lay juſt by; and taking out my pencil, experienced the moſt heart-felt ſatisfaction as I drew a ſketch of this picture of fraternal affection. In order to compleat the piece, I introduced the end of a hedge, a barn-door, and ſome broken pieces of cart-wheels that lay ſcattered about, exactly in the ſame ſituation in which I found them; ſo that, at the expiration of an hour, I had finiſhed a little deſign, at once correct and intereſting, without the ſmalleſt aid from imagination. This confirmed me in the reſolution I had before adopted, to take Nature for my only model in future.

The riches of Nature are inexhauſtible; ſhe is alone capable of forming the greateſt maſters. As much, indeed, may be alledged in favour of rules, as is advanced in praiſe of civil ſociety: an artiſt who invariably adheres to them, will never produce any thing abſolutely bad; as a man who obeys the laws, and ſubmits to the reſtraints of decorum, can never be an inſupportable neighbour, or a notorious rogue. But, let them ſay what they will, rules only tend to deſtroy the true ſentiments and genuine expreſſions of Nature. Critiicks may, indeed, aſſert that they effect the ſuppreſſion of extravagance, and prevent deformity; but I maintain, that they operate as reſtraints to genius, and that the errors they correct would be leſs detrimental to the art, than the loſs of thoſe beauties which they mar. It is in painting as in love: a young man of an ardent diſpoſition conceives a paſſion for a woman; he devotes to her every hour of the day; deſtroys his health by his eager aſſiduity; and laviſhes his whole fortune to convince her that ſhe is the ſole object of his affection. Suppoſe ſome prudent citizen ſhould addreſs the youth in theſe terms—'Young man, 'love is indeed a natural paſſion, but 'ſhould be guided by the rules of pru'dence. Make a proper diviſion of your 'time; devote the beſt part of it to bu'ſineſs, and only give your leiſure hours 'to your miſtreſs: enter into an exact 'calculation of your income; and if, 'when all neceſſary expences are defray'ed, any thing ſhould remain, I have no 'objection to your making her a trifling 'preſent now and then, on her birth'day, or ſo—but let not the repetition 'of your gifts be too frequent.' If the young man follows this prudent advice, he may doubtleſs make a very uſeful ſubject, and a good fellow of a college; but a bad lover, and a worſe artiſt. Oh! my friend! why does the torrent of genius ſo ſeldom overflow it's banks?—Why do not it's impetuous waves more frequently riſe and excite aſtoniſhment by the rapidity of their courſe? Alas! cold, phlegmatick, contracted ſouls, have eſtabliſhed their reſidence on either ſide of the ſtream; and, leſt it's inundations ſhould overwhelm their paltry habitations, they have recourſe to dams and trenches, to confine the torrent, and avert the danger that threatens them.

LETTER IX.

MAY 27.

WHAT with my digreſſive compariſons, and the violence of my enthuſiaſm, I find, I forgot to finiſh my narrative. After remaining more than two hours on the plough, wholly abſorbed in thoſe pictureſque ideas which I attempted to explain in my laſt letter, towards evening, I ſaw a young woman, with a baſket on her arm, come running to the children, who had not ſtirred from the ſpot. As ſhe approached them, ſhe called out, 'Philip, you are a very good 'boy!' As ſhe paſſed me, ſhe curtſied; I returned her ſalute, and riſing from my ſeat, advanced towards her, and aſked her if ſhe was the mother of thoſe children. She anſwered in the affirmative; and having given a cake to the eldeſt, ſhe took the little one in her arms, and preſſed it to her boſom with all the warmth of maternal affection. 'I en'truſted my little one to the care of Phi'lip,' ſaid ſhe, 'while I went to town 'with his brother, to buy ſome white 'bread, ſome ſugar, and an earthen pip'kin (theſe were the contents of her 'baſket) to make ſome broth in to'night for John (meaning the young'eſt.) The rogues broke my pot yeſ'terday, in quarrelling for ſome meat 'that was left in it.' I then aſked her where her other boy was; and while ſhe was telling me that he was gone to drive home two geeſe that were feeding in the fields. he came ſkipping up to us, and gave his brother an oſier twig. I continued my converſation with the mother, and found that ſhe was daughter to the ſchoolmaſter of the village, and that her huſband was gone to Switzerland, to receive a legacy that had been bequeathed him by a deceaſed relation. 'They 'endeavoured to defraud him of it,' ſaid ſhe, 'and made no anſwers to his 'letters; ſo he was obliged to go him'ſelf. I have not heard from him ſince 'he left me—God grant that no harm 'may have befallen him!' I parted from her with regret; and, before I took my leave, gave each of the children a creutzer, and another to the mother, to buy a cake for John the firſt time ſhe went to the town.

I con-

I confeſs to you, my dear friend, that I find nothing ſo effectual to quell the raging tumult of my ſoul, as the ſight of ſuch a tranquil being, who moves, unmoleſted by the troubles of reflection, in the confined circle of her exiſtence; performs her daily occupations, exempt from care or thought; and views the falling leaves without any other idea than that of approaching winter.

My viſits to this delicious ſpot are frequent; the children are become familiar with me; I give them ſugar when I take my coffee, and at night I partake of their whey and bread and butter. On Sunday they regularly receive their creutzer; for if I happen not to be there myſelf after veſpers, my landlady has orders to pay it.

They are now ſo uſed to me, that they relate all their little ſtories without fear or reſtraint. I am particularly amuſed with obſerving the effects of their paſſions, and the ſimplicity with which they diſplay their different inclinations, when the children of the village are all collected together. Their mother was, at firſt, continually calling out to tell them that they were troubleſome to the gentleman; but, by dint of perſeverance, I have at length prevailed on her to let them do as they pleaſe.

LETTER X.

JUNE 16.

WHY don't I write to you?—Do you pretend to penetration, and aſk ſuch a queſtion?—You might have ſuppoſed that I was well; and even—— To be ſhort, I have formed an acquaintance that more nearly affects my heart. I have found——I know not what.

I ſhould find ſome difficulty in giving you a regular account of the manner in which I formed an acquaintance with the moſt amiable of her ſex. I am contented—happy; and, moreover, a bad hiſtorian.

To ſay that ſhe is an angel, would be to ſay no more than every man ſays of his miſtreſs; and yet I am in no ſituation to deſcribe either the nature or force of her accompliſhments: ſuffice it to ſay, that ſhe has captivated all my ſenſes. Such ſweet ſimplicity, with ſo elevated an underſtanding! ſo mild, and yet ſo animated! a mind ſo placid, with a life ſo active!—But theſe are the mere common-place phraſes of abſtract ideas, and do not expreſs a ſingle trait of her character. Some other time—No, I muſt relate the ſtory immediately; if I defer it, it is loſt for ever: for, between ourſelves, ſince I began this letter, I have been thrice tempted to throw down my pen, mount my horſe, and fly to her; and yet I made a vow this morning that I would not ſtir from home the whole day. I run to the window every moment, to ſee how much of his daily courſe the ſun has yet to perform.

I could no longer refrain; I was obliged to go at laſt: I am now returned, and am making my rural repaſt, as I write to you. What exquiſite pleaſure it afforded me, to ſee her ſurrounded by her little family!—But if I go on in the ſame ſtyle, you'll know no more at the end of my letter, than you did at the beginning. Be attentive, then; I'll endeavour to check my imagination, and enter into a regular detail.

You may remember that I told you, ſome time ago, I had formed an acquaintance with Mr. S. the Prince's ſteward; and that he had given me a preſſing invitation to go and viſit him in his retirement, or rather in his little kingdom. I deferred going, however, from time to time; and probably ſhould never have gone, had not chance diſcovered to me the rich treaſure that lies concealed beneath theſe tranquil ſhades of happy obſcurity. Some young men of the town had entreated me to accompany them to a rural ball, that was to be given in the neighbourhood; and I accordingly engaged a partner who was poſſeſſed of ſome beauty, and an agreeable diſpoſition, though endued with no peculiar attractions. It was agreed that I ſhould take her and her aunt in a coach; and that, on our road, we ſhould call on Charlotte S. who was to accompany us to the ball. 'You 'will now ſee a moſt lovely girl,' ſaid my partner, as we entered the avenue that leads to the ſteward's houſe. 'Yes; 'but be careful not to fall in love with 'her,' added the cautious aunt. 'Why 'ſo?'—'Becauſe ſhe is already engaged 'to a very worthy man, who is now 'gone to regulate his affairs, on the 'death of his father, and to ſolicit a 'place of importance.' I heard this intelligence with the moſt perfect indifference.

It was near ſun-ſet when we arrived

at

at the gate. The evening was remarkably warm, and the dark louring clouds that ſkirted the horizon ſeemed to threaten us with a ſtorm. The women began to expreſs their apprehenſions that our party would be deranged. But, though I thought their fears were well-founded, I was unwilling to confirm them; and therefore aſſuming a look of wonderful ſagacity, and pretending to great ſkill in foretelling the weather, I aſſured them they had nothing to dread.

I had alighted from the carriage, when a ſervant came to the gate, to requeſt that we would wait one minute for her miſtreſs. I croſſed the court-yard, and mounting the ſteps, entered an apartment, where the moſt delightful ſcene I had ever beheld preſented itſelf to my ſight. Six children, the eldeſt of whom was not more than eleven years old, were crouding round a young perſon, of a middle ſize, moſt admirably ſhaped, and dreſſed in a plain white gown, adorned with roſe-coloured ribbands. She had a brown loaf in her hand, which ſhe was cutting and diſtributing to her little petitioners, in pieces proportioned to their age and appetite. They extended their hands with the utmoſt eagerneſs to receive them, and thanked her with the moſt affecting ſimplicity. When each had got his portion, they all ran to the gate, to ſteal a look at the company, and at the carriage that was come to take their Charlotte away. 'I beg your pardon,' ſaid ſhe, 'for having given you the trouble to 'alight, and am concerned that I ſhould 'have detained the ladies ſo long; but 'I have been ſo buſy in dreſſing, and in 'making ſome little domeſtick arrange-'ments that it was neceſſary to com-'pleat before I left home, that I had 'quite forgotten to give my children 'their accuſtomed meal; and they do 'not like to receive it from any other 'than myſelf.' I ſtammered out ſome compliment that had no meaning in it. My whole ſoul was abſorbed in contemplating her elegant figure, her winning manner; in liſtening to the enchanting ſounds of her voice: and I had but time enough to recover myſelf, before ſhe ran into an adjoining room to fetch her gloves and fan. While ſhe was gone, the children viewed me aſkance, and then whiſpered to each other. I approached the youngeſt, who has a moſt inſinuating countenance, but the little rogue drew back to avoid me; when Charlotte, entering the room, told him to ſhake hands with his couſin. The child then extended his hand with great cordiality, and I could not refrain from giving him a hearty kiſs.

'Couſin!' ſaid I to Charlotte, as I handed her to the carriage, 'do you 'then think me worthy the happineſs of 'being allied to you?'—'Oh!' replied ſhe, with an arch ſmile, 'my couſins 'are very numerous, and I ſhould be 'ſorry you were the leaſt worthy of 'the whole family.' Before ſhe left the houſe, ſhe gave ſtrict orders to Sophia, the eldeſt of her ſiſters, to take great care of the children, and not to forget to ſalute her papa, when he returned from his evening walk. She likewiſe ordered the young ones to pay the ſame obedience to Sophia as to herſelf, which moſt of them faithfully promiſed; but a little ſilver-haired girl of about ſix years old, who looked wiſer than the reſt, ſaid 'Ah! but it is not 'you though, Charlotte; we would ra-'ther it were you yourſelf!' In the mean time, the two eldeſt boys had got up behind the carriage; and, at my requeſt, Charlotte gave them permiſſion to go with us to the end of the wood, after ſhe had exacted a promiſe from them that they would ſit ſtill and hold faſt. We had ſcarcely had time to ſeat ourſelves, and the ladies to pay their uſual compliments of ſalutation, when Charlotte ſtopped the carriage, and made her brothers deſcend from their poſt. Here another ſcene of affection enſued: they would inſiſt on kiſſing her hand before they went; the eldeſt preſſed it to his lips with all the tenderneſs of a boy of fifteen, while the other kiſſed it with ſpirit and vivacity. She deſired them again to remember her to the children at home, and we drove on. The old lady aſked her, if ſhe had peruſed the book which ſhe had laſt ſent her. 'No,' ſaid Charlotte; 'I have not; I cannot 'ſay that it pleaſes me better than the 'firſt you ſent me.' You will eaſily conceive my ſurprize, when, on aſking what book it was that afforded her ſo little amuſement, ſhe told me it was ———. Her remarks were replete with ſound judgment; I diſcovered new charms in every word ſhe uttered; new rays of genius ſeemed to dart from every feature of her face; and I ſoon began to perceive that ſhe took more ſatisfaction in

in the display of her talents when she observed that they were not lost upon me.

'When I was somewhat younger,' said she, 'nothing afforded me so much 'delight as a novel. Heaven knows 'what pleasure I experienced, when I 'could retire, on a Sunday afternoon, 'into some solitary corner, and give a 'loose to my sensibility, by partaking 'of the joy or sorrow of the heroine of 'a romance! I must confess, indeed, 'that I still retain a faint partiality for 'that class of literature; but since do-'mestick occupations will not permit 'me to devote much of my time to 'reading, I am desirous that the few 'books I do read should be suited to 'my taste. I prefer an author whose 'subject is adapted to my situation in 'life; whose scenes, faithfully copied 'from nature, continually remind me 'of my own domestick enjoyments; 'which, though I do not regard as the 'emblems of a paradise, I cannot but 'consider as a source of inexpressible 'happiness!' I endeavoured to conceal the emotion which the close of her observation excited; but my precaution was fruitless; for, after she had passed her judgment on some other works, and delivered her opinion of the Vicar of Wakefield, with equal discernment and feeling, I was wholly unable to repress my sentiments, and burst forth into expressions of praise that the most rigid justice could not have accused of exaggeration. Some time elapsed before I perceived that we had engrossed the whole of the conversation; though the old lady gave me several significant looks, which indeed I did not take much notice of. At length, however, it became general, and we talked of the pleasures of dancing. 'If to love dancing be a 'fault,' said Charlotte, 'I must plead 'guilty, for I confess there is no amuse-'ment that affords me a greater plea-'sure. If I experience any uneasiness, 'I run to my harpsichord, play a coun-'try-dance, and all my cares are in-'stantly dispelled.'

During this conversation my eyes were feasting on her youthful charms; while my attention was so wholly engrossed by the strength and majesty of her ideas, that I scarcely heard the words which expressed them. This you, who know me, will easily credit.

At length the carriage stopped; when I alighted, and conducted the ladies to the assembly-room, without knowing where I was, or what I was about.

The ball opened with minuets. I danced several with different women; and found that those who were most awkward were most anxious to prolong them. When they were finished, we began country-dances. Charlotte and her partner were the first couple, and consequently led the dance. The delight I experienced in contemplating her lovely form, when she came to describe the figure with us, is more easily conceived than expressed. You should see her dance: her mind is so intent on what she is about, that she appears wholly insensible to every object around her. 'Grace is in all her steps, heaven in her 'eye, in every gesture dignity and 'love!'

I requested she would favour me with her hand for the second dance; but being previously engaged, she promised to dance the third with me; telling me, at the same time, with the most engaging affability, that she was more partial to allemandes. 'It is the custom here,' said she, 'for every gentleman to dance 'allemandes with the lady he brings 'with him; but my partner is not much 'used to them, and will be very glad if 'I'll excuse him. The lady with whom 'you just danced is in the same predi-'cament; but, by the manner in which 'you danced country-dances yourself, 'if I mistake not, you have been long 'accustomed to them. If, therefore, it 'be agreeable to you to dance alle-'mandes with me, go and propose it to 'my partner, while I mention it to 'yours.' The matter was speedily arranged; and it was agreed that, while Charlotte and I were dancing, her partner should attend on mine.

When we first began, we amused ourselves by making a few turns with our arms. Heavens! what grace, what agility, she displayed in every motion! When the measure changed, and the different couples began to turn round each other like spheres, the unskilfulness of the greatest part of them at first produced some disorder; but we prudently kept aloof till the others had tired themselves: and, when they sate down, we took their places; and, supported but by one other couple, continued the dance.

In my life I never displayed so much skill. I felt more than mortal. What exquisite

exquiſite delight, to hold the lovely creature in my arms, to embrace that heavenly form, and fly like lightning round the room, loſt to every other object!—But, to be ſincere with you, my dear friend, at that happy moment I made a vow, that a woman I loved, and whom I deſigned for my wife, ſhould never dance an allemande with any man but myſelf: and may I periſh if——You know what I mean.

After taking ſome turns round the room, to recover our breath, Charlotte ſat down: when I cut ſome lemons, which I had previouſly taken from the ſideboard while they were making the negus, into ſlices; and, having dipped them in ſugar, made her eat ſome. I had the pleaſure to find that they refreſhed her exceedingly: and, as there were no more to be had, I could not but execrate the woman that ſat next to her; who, taking an unfair advantage of my politeneſs, deprived her of the beſt half.

We were the ſecond couple in the third country-dance. As I was turning my partner, and ſympathizing in that pure and exquiſite pleaſure of which every motion of her arms and eyes was moſt ſtrongly expreſſive, a lady of a certain age, whoſe agreeable countenance had before attracted my notice, looked at Charlotte, and ſmiled; then holding up her finger, in a threatening attitude, pronounced the name of Albert in a very ſignificant tone of voice. 'May 'I venture to aſk,' ſaid I to Charlotte, 'without incurring the cenſure of im-'pertinence, who this Albert is?' She was going to anſwer me, when we were obliged to ſeparate, to give *hands acroſs*; and afterwards, when we were *croſſing over*, I thought a ſudden gloom had overſpread her countenance. As ſhe gave me her hand to *lead outſides*—'Why,' ſaid ſhe, 'ſhould I wiſh to 'conceal it? Albert is a worthy man, 'to whom I am engaged.'

Though this intelligence I had before received from the ladies in the coach, it now appeared wholly new to me; becauſe my thoughts having been entirely engroſſed by the object that, in ſo ſhort a time, had become ſo dear to my ſoul, the idea had never occurred to my mind. The ſenſations it inſpired ſo diſconcerted me, that I was unable to continue the dance with any degree of regularity: I paid no attention to the muſick; miſtook the figure; and, in ſhort, threw all the dancers into ſuch confuſion, that the utmoſt exertions of Charlotte were almoſt inadequate to the reeſtabliſhment of order.

Before the dance was finiſhed, the lightning, which had been long viſible in the horizon, and which I had affirmed to be the mere effect of heat, began to aſſume a more formidable appearance; while the noiſe of the thunder prevailed over that of the muſick. Three ladies flew from their places, and were immediately followed by their partners; the confuſion then became general, and the muſick ceaſed.

When any circumſtance of terror or diſtreſs overtakes us in the hour of enjoyment, the impreſſion it makes on the mind is infinitely more powerful than it would be at any other period. This may either proceed from the contraſt; or, as is more probable, from the peculiar ſtate of our ſenſes at that time; for, when they are ſtrongly affected by any particular object, their general perception becomes more ſudden and acute. Hence might ariſe thoſe violent contortions which ſuddenly deformed the faces of moſt of the women in the room. One of the moſt prudent ſeated herſelf in a corner, with her back to the window, and her fingers applied to the apertures of her ears; another placed herſelf on her knees before her, and hid her face in her lap; a third, gliding in between her two ſiſters, embraced them with great eagerneſs, and burſt into tears: ſome were for going home; while others, who knew ſtill leſs what they were about, had not ſufficient preſence of mind to repreſs the temerity of their indiſcreet lovers, who were buſily employed in ſtealing from their lips thoſe ſighs that were addreſſed to Heaven.

Some of the men had gone down ſtairs, to ſmoke their pipes in peace, and the reſt of the company were diſperſed about; when the landlady propoſed to conduct us to an apartment where the entrance of the lightning was effectually impeded by the double ſecurity of window-ſhutters and curtains. We had no ſooner entered this room, than Charlotte began to place the chairs for the purpoſe of forming a circle, that we might commence ſome game or other, in order to paſs away the remainder of the evening.

Many of our prudes began to draw themſelves

themſelves up, and to look prim, in expectation that *forfeits*, or ſome ſimilar game, would be propoſed. But, after ſome deliberation, the game of *Counting* was fixed upon, the laws of which were thus explained by Charlotte. 'Mind—'I ſhall go from right to left; while 'you are to count as you ſit, one after 'another, from one to a thouſand; and 'you muſt count as faſt as you can. 'Whoever ſtops, or miſcounts, is to 'receive a box on the ear.'

It was truly laughable to ſee her move round the circle, with her arms extended. The perſon ſhe firſt pointed to cried, 'One;' ſhe who ſat next, 'Two;' the third, 'Three:' and ſo on, till Charlotte began to increaſe the velocity of her motion; when all order and regularity were ſoon deſtroyed. One had a box on the ear for laughing; another, for miſcounting; and, as to me, I ſoon got two; which I was pleaſed to find inflicted with greater force than the others. A general burſt of laughter put an end to our game, long before ſhe had counted the thouſand.

The violence of the ſtorm had by this time conſiderably abated; and the company ſeparating in ſmall parties, I followed Charlotte into the ball-room. In our way thither ſhe obſerved to me, that the blows ſhe had inflicted had ſoon made them loſe their apprehenſions. 'I 'was as fearful,' ſaid ſhe, 'as the moſt 'timid of them; but, by affecting cou-'rage, for the purpoſe of exhilarating 'the ſpirits of the company, I loſt my 'fears in reality.'

We walked up to a window that was open from whence we heard the thunder, that ſtill rolled at a diſtance; while a prolifick ſhower watered the fields, and impregnated the air, already dilated by the heat, with a moſt refreſhing odour. Charlotte's head was reclined upon her hand; her eyes wandered over the whole extent of country that lay open before us; from thence ſhe raiſed them towards the heavens, and then caſt them upon me. I ſaw the ſtarting tear. She placed her hand upon mine; and, with a moſt emphatick tone of voice, pronounced the name of Klopſtock. The ſound ſtruck to my heart, and overwhelmed me with a torrent of ſenſations that no words can expreſs. I ſunk beneath their weight. I reclined my face upon her hand; and, imprinting on it a fervent kiſs, bathed it with tears of joy. As I raiſed myſelf, I fixed my looks ſtedfaſtly on Charlotte. 'Oh, divine 'Klopſtock! why didſt thou not be-'hold thy apotheoſis in her eyes!—And 'thy ſacred name, ſo often profaned, 'never, ah! never may I hear it again 'pronounced!'

LETTER XI.

JUNE 19.

I Have already forgotten at what part of my ſtory I left off: all I know is, that it was two in the morning when I got to bed; and that if, inſtead of writing to you, I had had you to converſe with, I ſhould probably have amuſed you till day-light.

I did not tell you what paſſed in our return from the ball; nor can I devote this day to narration.

It was one of the moſt beautiful mornings I ever beheld. The rain ſtill dropped from the trees, and all nature ſeemed revived.

Our companions were aſleep: Charlotte aſked me if I did not wiſh to join them; and begged that I would not impoſe the ſmalleſt reſtraint on my inclinations on her account. 'So long as thoſe eyes 'remain open,' ſaid I, looking ſtedfaſtly in her face, 'there is no danger 'of mine being cloſed.' Accordingly, we both kept awake till the carriage ſtopped at her door, which was gently opened by the maid; who, in anſwer to Charlotte's enquiries, told her, that her father and the children were all well, and ſtill in bed. I took my leave, with a promiſe to ſee her again in the courſe of the day: and I kept my word with religious ſcrupuloſity.

And now ſun, moon, and ſtars, may perform their deſtined revolutions unobſerved by me. I no longer know whether it be day, or whether it be night. The whole world is loſt to me.

LETTER XII.

JUNE 21.

MY days glide ſmoothly along: they are as pregnant with happineſs as thoſe which the Almighty reſerves for his elect; and, whatever misfortunes may hereafter befal me, never

ſhall I ſay that I have not taſted of bliſs, and of bliſs the pureſt which this life can beſtow.

You know my little retreat at Walheim: I have now eſtabliſhed my reſidence there; it is but half a league from thence to Charlotte's. There, ſecluded from the vain and buſy world, I feel the charms of exiſtence, and experience the moſt perfect pleaſure of which man is ſuſceptible.

When I firſt choſe Walheim for the object of my walks, little did I think it was ſituated ſo near to heaven! How often, in my long rambles, have I contemplated that ruſtick habitation which now forms the centre of all my deſires! ſometimes from the lofty ſummit of yonder mountain; ſometimes from the verdant mead on the oppoſite ſide of the river.

I have often reflected on the ſtrange deſire which impels mankind to extend their views beyond the preſent ſcene, and to wander about in ſearch of new diſcoveries: and likewiſe on that ſecret impulſe of the mind which, like a ſpring extended to it's utmoſt limits, inclines them to recoil back again to their circle, and there enjoy that repoſe which activity and exertion deny.

It is aſtoniſhing how forcibly I felt myſelf attracted to this ſpot when I firſt arrived here, and from the top of the hill contemplated the beauties of the valley beneath. I wiſhed to wander midſt the cool receſſes of the neighbouring grove; from the ſummit of that rock to extend my view over the whole country; to ſtray among thoſe ſolitary vales that occaſionally divide yonder chain of hills! I came, and returned from whence I ſet out, without having attained the object of my hopes. Alas! my friend, diſtant objects are like future events! In contemplating the former, the ſight is loſt in the intermediate ſpace; and, in reflecting on the latter, our mental perceptions are involved in obſcurity. We feel ourſelves powerfully attracted by the ſcene before us; purſue the flitting phantoms as they riſe; and, after a tedious chace, find that we have followed a ſhadow.

Thus the reſtleſs wanderer ſighs for his native ſoil; and finds in his own peaceful habitation, in the embraces of his wife, the circle of his family, and his domeſtick occupations, that peace of mind in ſearch of which he had vainly traverſed the whole ſurface of the globe*.

When I quit the town at ſun-riſe, to repair to my favourite ſpot, where I gather my own peaſe; and, ſitting in a ſolitary corner, ſhell them as I read Homer: when, having put them into the pot, I place myſelf by the kitchen-fire, to ſtir them as they boil; it is then I can repreſent to myſelf the haughty and illuſtrious ſuitors of Penelope killing and dreſſing their own meat. There is not any thing in nature that inſpires me with ſentiments ſo pleaſing and tranquil, as thoſe ideas of the patriarchal life which, thank Heaven! I can now, without any appearance of affectation, realize in my own!

Happy is it for me, that I am endued with a heart capable of feeling the ſame ſimple and innocent pleaſure as the man who ſees on his table the cabbage he has raiſed with his own hand; and who, while he enjoys his vegetable meal, recals all the pleaſing hours he beſtowed on it's cultivation; the fine morning on

* This idea is admirably expreſſed in one of the beſt poems in our language. E. T.

'Vain, very vain, my weary ſearch, to find
'That bliſs which only centers in the mind:
'Why have I ſtray'd from pleaſure and repoſe,
'To ſeek a good each government beſtows?

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'Still to ourſelves in every place conſign'd,
'Our own felicity we make, or find.
'With ſecret courſe, which no loud ſtorms annoy,
'Glides the ſmooth current of domeſtick joy.'

GOLDSMITH'S TRAVELLER.

which

which he planted it; the mild evenings on which he watered it; and the bliſsful moments in which he contemplated it's progreſſive growth.

LETTER XIII.

JUNE 29.

THE day before yeſterday, the phyſician of the town came to pay a viſit to the ſteward. He found me upon the floor, playing with the children; ſome of whom were riding on my back, while others were tickling me; and we were all making a great noiſe. The doctor, a formal being, whoſe hands, while he ſpeaks, are conſtantly employed in adjuſting the plaits of his ruffles, and arranging the frill of his ſhirt, thought the amuſement I was engaged in degrading to the dignity of man. I perceived it by his countenance. I did not, however, ſuffer his frowns to interrupt my diverſion; but, while he diſplayed his eloquence, continued to rebuild the houſes of cards which the children had blown down. When he returned, he told the whole town that the ſteward's children were ſufficiently ſpoiled before, but that now Werter was compleating their ruin.

You, my friend, know my fondneſs for children: there are not any objects on earth, the contemplation of which affords me equal delight. When I conſider them with attention, and diſcover in the little beings the ſeeds of thoſe virtues and qualities which will hereafter be ſo neceſſary to them; when I behold in the obſtinate the future firmneſs and conſtancy of a great and noble character; in the thoughtleſs and capricious, that happy flow of ſpirits which will enable them to paſs lightly over the ſorrows and dangers of life; when I ſee thoſe pure and uncorrupted ſeeds, ſo pregnant with goodneſs and felicity; I continually repeat to myſelf thoſe memorable words of our Great Teacher—'If you become not like unto one of 'theſe!'—And yet, my friend, do we not treat theſe children, who are our equals, and whom we ought to look up to as our models, as our ſubjects, or rather as our ſlaves? We do not ſuffer them to have a will of their own. Have we, then, none ourſelves? Whence do we derive our excluſive right? Is it from our age and experience? Great God! thou beholdeſt from thy throne the great children and the little children of the earth; and Thy Son has long ſince declared to which thou giveſt the preference. But, alas! it is alſo an eſtabliſhed truth, that they believe in him, and do not attend to his inſtructions: they form their children after their own image; and—— Adieu, my friend. I will purſue this ſubject no farther.

LETTER XIV.

JULY 1.

MY heart, which ſuffers more than the man whoſe vitals are daily conſuming by the ſlow rage of a burning fever, deeply feels the acknowledged power of Charlotte to beſtow the moſt pleaſing conſolation on the drooping child of Sickneſs.

She is going to paſs ſome days in town, with a lady of her acquaintance, whoſe phyſicians have reſigned her to her fate, and who is anxious to have Charlotte with her in her laſt moments.

I went laſt week, with this incomparable girl, to pay a viſit to the vicar of St. ——, a ſmall village in the mountains, about half a league from hence. We reached the place about four o'clock. Charlotte's ſecond ſiſter was with us. When we entered the court, which is ſhaded by two large walnut-trees, we found the good old man ſitting on a bench before his door. The ſight of Charlotte ſeemed to inſpire him with the vigour of youth. He forgot his ſtick; and, riſing from his ſeat, was advancing towards her: but ſhe ran to him; and, having made him ſit down again, placed herſelf by his ſide. She then preſented a thouſand compliments from her father; and beſtowed a thouſand kiſſes on the dirty face of a ſpoiled child, who was the old man's darling. I wiſh you had been there, to have obſerved her affectionate attention to him; to have heard her raiſe her voice, becauſe he is rather deaf, and tell him of young and healthy people, who had died ſuddenly in the bloſſom of life, when it could leaſt have been expected; to commend the virtues of the Carelſtad waters, and approve his intention of trying their efficacy the enſuing ſummer; aſſuring him, that he looked infinitely better than when ſhe laſt ſaw him.

During this time, I had paid my reſpects to his wife, who is ſome years younger than himſelf. The good old man was in high ſpirits; and, as I could not help admiring the beauty of his walnut-trees, which formed ſuch an agreeable ſhade over our heads, he began to tell us their hiſtory. 'As to the 'oldeſt of them,' ſaid he, 'we know 'not by whom it was planted: ſome 'ſay it was by one vicar, ſome by another. But the young one there is 'the exact age of my wife: it will be 'fifty years old next October. Her 'father planted it in the morning, and 'ſhe came into the world in the evening. He was my predeceſſor in this 'living; and that tree was dearer to 'him than you can imagine. It is 'equally dear to me. My wife was 'ſitting on a poſt beneath it, knitting, 'when I firſt ſet foot in this court, 'ſeven and twenty years ago: I was 'then but a poor ſtudent.'

Here Charlotte interrupted him, to enquire after his daughter; who, he told her, was gone into the meadow, with Mr. Schmidt, to ſee the harveſt-folks. He then reſumed the thread of his ſtory; and told us how he had contrived to inſinuate himſelf into the good graces of his predeceſſor, and his daughter; and how he became firſt his curate, and then his ſucceſſor. He had ſcarcely finiſhed his ſtory, when his daughter made her appearance, accompanied by Mr. Schmidt. She embraced Charlotte with marks of the moſt tender affection; and, I aſſure you, her looks prepoſſeſſed me in her favour. She is a genteel, lively, brown girl; and a reaſonable man might paſs his time very happily with her in the country. Her lover, for ſuch Mr. Schmidt immediately appeared to be, has an agreeable perſon; but is ſo ſilent and reſerved, that he reſiſted the utmoſt endeavours of Charlotte to urge him to join in the converſation. I was the more piqued at his ſilence, becauſe I was convinced in my own mind that it proceeded leſs from a want of talents, than from caprice, and ſupercilious ill-humour. This opinion was, unfortunately, ſoon confirmed: for, as we were afterwards taking a walk together, I entered into converſation with Miſs Frederica, the vicar's daughter; when this gentleman's countenance, which is naturally dark, became ſo gloomy, that Charlotte thought it neceſſary to pull me by the ſleeve, in order to make me deſiſt.

There is not any thing that affords me greater concern, than to ſee men occupied in tormenting one another: particularly when, in the bloom of their youth, in the tranſient ſeaſon of pleaſure, inſtead of enjoying the few ſhort days of ſunſhine that are allotted them, they waſte them in idle diſputes; and perceive, but when too late to reform, that their prodigality is irreparable. This idea dwelt on my mind: and, in the evening, when we returned to the parſonage-houſe, as we were partaking of a cold collation, the converſation turned on the pains and pleaſures of this ſublunary world. I could not refrain from ſeizing ſo favourable an opportunity to inveigh bitterly againſt the effects of ill-humour. 'We mortals,' ſaid I, 'are 'apt to complain that our days of happineſs bear but a very unequal proportion to thoſe which are tinged with 'miſery; and it appears to me that our 'complaints are generally devoid of 'foundation. Was the heart of man 'ever open to the enjoyment of that 'good which the paternal care of his 'Creator daily provides for him, he 'would find himſelf at all times endued with ſufficient ſtrength to ſupport the preſſure of unavoidable evil.' —'But it is not always in our power 'to command our temper,' ſaid the vicar's wife: 'that innate ſympathy 'which ſubſiſts between the mind and 'the body, renders them ſo wholly dependent on each other, that when one 'is affected, the other muſt neceſſarily 'ſuffer.' I acceded to the juſtice of her remark. 'We muſt, then,' ſaid I, 'look on ill-humour as a diſorder, and 'ſee if there be no remedy that can 'effect it's cure.'—'That is no bad 'idea,' ſaid Charlotte; 'and I am 'fully of opinion a remedy might eaſily 'be diſcovered; at leaſt, if I may judge 'from my own feelings: for, the moment any anxiety attempts to take poſſeſſion of my mind, and fix the gloom 'of thought upon my brow, I run into 'the garden, hum over a favourite air 'or two, and frighten the diſmal fiend 'away.'—'That is preciſely what I 'meant to enforce,' I replied. 'It is 'with ill-humour as it is with ſloth. 'There is a kind of indolence to which

'we

'we are naturally inclined; yet, when 'we can once aſſume ſufficient courage 'to reſiſt it's attacks, we proceed with 'alacrity, and find a real pleaſure in 'activity.' Frederica was very attentive to what I ſaid; and the young man ventured to obſerve that, not being maſters of ourſelves, we could not poſſibly command our feelings. 'We 'are now talking,' ſaid I, 'of a diſ'agreeable ſenſation, which every man 'is anxious to get rid of; and no one 'can tell the extent of his ſtrength till 'experience has taught him to define it. 'A ſick man will certainly be eager in 'his ſearch after phyſicians; will purſue their advice with the utmoſt reſignation, and not refuſe to take the 'moſt nauſeous medicines for the recovery of that health which is the 'object of his wiſhes.'

I perceived that the worthy old vicar was inclining his head, to liſten to our diſcourſe; therefore, raiſing my voice, I addreſſed myſelf to him. 'There is 'ſcarcely a crime, Sir,' ſaid I, 'which 'the eloquence of the pulpit has not 'been employed to ſuppreſs; but I do 'not believe that any one has yet made 'ill-humour the ſubject of a ſermon.' —'Let city-parſons preach againſt ill'humour,' ſaid the old man, 'for the 'good folks in the country are ſtrangers 'to it; though I don't think that it 'would be amiſs here, now and then, 'were it only to give an occaſional leſſon 'to my wife and the ſteward.' The company laughed heartily, and the vicar partook of their mirth; which brought on a violent cough, that interrupted the converſation for ſome minutes. Mr. Schmidt then reſumed the ſubject. 'In 'calling ill-humour a vice,' ſaid he, 'it appears to me that you have been 'guilty of exaggeration.'—'Far from 'it,' ſaid I; 'if every affection of the 'mind, whoſe pernicious effects are not 'merely confined to ourſelves, but extend to all thoſe who ſurround us, can 'merit ſuch an appellation. Is it not 'ſufficient that we poſſeſs not the power 'of beſtowing happineſs on each other, 'without attempting to deprive one another of that portion of content which 'every man is, at times, capable of enjoying? Shew me a ſplenetick man, 'endued with ſtrength of mind to conceal his ill-humour; who bears the 'dark burden of his ſpleen himſelf; 'nor ſeeks to interrupt the pleaſures of 'thoſe who are near him! No; ill-humour proceeds from a diſcontented 'ſenſe of our own inſufficiency, mixed 'with a proportionable ſhare of envy, 'the baſe offſpring of ſtupid vanity. 'We behold men happy, whoſe happineſs is not the work of our own hands; 'that is the ſource of our diſpleaſure.' Charlotte looked me in the face, and ſmiled at the warmth with which I ſpoke; while a tear, which I perceived ſtarting from the eye of Frederica, induced me to proceed. 'Woe be,' ſaid I, 'unto 'thoſe who exert the power they have 'acquired over a heart for the cruel 'purpoſe of depriving it of thoſe ſimple 'innate pleaſures which are given by 'Nature! No gifts, however ſumptuous; no attention, however marked; 'can make us the ſmalleſt amends for 'the loſs of one inſtant of inborn happineſs, which the envy of a tyrant has 'impelled him to deſtroy!'

At this moment my heart was full; a thouſand recollections preſſed upon my mind; and my eyes were filled with tears. 'We ſhould ſay to ourſelves 'every day,' I exclaimed, 'What good 'can we do to our friends? We can only 'be careful not to interrupt their pleaſures, and attempt to increaſe their 'happineſs by participation. Can we, 'when their ſouls are afflicted by ſome 'violent paſſion, when their hearts are 'rent by grief, afford them the ſmalleſt 'degree of conſolation?

'And, when the laſt fatal diſeaſe 'ſeizes the unhappy victim of thy tyranny; when, ſtretched out and exhauſted, he raiſes his dim eyes to 'Heaven, while the chilling damps of 'Death bedew his pallid front—then, 'thou ſtandeſt at his bed-ſide like a 'convicted culprit, ſenſible, when too 'late, of the crime thou haſt committed—thou feeleſt, with ſorrow and 'compunction, thy total inability to 'beſtow a ſingle atom of comfort, a 'ſingle ſpark of animation, on the 'wretched being who now totters on 'the verge of deſtruction!'

In pronouncing theſe words, the recollection of a ſimilar ſcene, at which I had been preſent, aſſailed my heart with all the horrors of reality. I put my handkerchief to my eyes, and retired abruptly from the company; nor did I recover myſelf till I heard the ſound of Charlotte's voice, who told me it was time to depart. As we walked home, with

with what tenderneſs did ſhe chide me! With what kind concern did ſhe repreſent to me the danger of intereſting myſelf thus deeply in every ſubject I attempted to diſcuſs! aſſured me that I ſhould become the victim of my ſenſibility, and urged me to be more careful of my life! 'Yes, angel of heaven! I will be careful! I will live for thee!'

LETTER XV.

JULY 6.

CHARLOTTE is ſtill with her dying friend; ſtill the ſame attentive, benevolent creature; whoſe looks, wherever they ſtray, can ſoothe the anguiſh of grief, and diſpenſe the balm of conſolation. She walked out yeſterday with her two little ſiſters, Marianne and Amelia: I was apprized of it, and went to meet them; we had a moſt delightful walk. On our return we ſtopped at my favourite fountain, which became a thouſand times dearer to my heart as Charlotte was ſitting on the little wall that ſurrounds it. I looked around me, and recalled to my mind the hours I had paſſed by it's ſide, when my heart was alone and unoccupied. 'Dear ſpring!' ſaid I, 'it is long ſince I enjoyed the 'bracing freſhneſs of your cooling 'ſtream; ſince then, how often have I 'paſſed, with haſty ſteps, your graſs-'grown margin, without caſting even 'a tranſient look upon you!' I looked down, and ſaw Amelia coming up the ſteps in great haſte, with a glaſs of water in her hand. I then turned my eyes on Charlotte, and my ſoul was ſtruck with a juſt ſenſe of her value*. Amelia, however, appeared with her glaſs, which Marianne wanted to take from her. 'No, no,' ſaid the dear child, with the utmoſt ſweetneſs of expreſſion, 'my 'dear Charlotte muſt drink firſt.' I was ſo tranſported with joy at this affectionate exclamation, that I could find no other means of expreſſing my rapture than by taking the child in my arms, and kiſſing her with ſuch eagerneſs, that ſhe began to cry. 'For ſhame!' ſaid Charlotte. 'Come here, my dear;' taking her by the hand, and leading her down the ſteps; 'make haſte and waſh your-'ſelf in that clear water, and then you'll 'be quite well again.' With what attention I obſerved the poor child as ſhe was waſhing her cheeks with her little hands, in the firm belief that the miraculous ſpring would cleanſe her from all polluſion, and prevent a long beard from appearing on her face! Though Charlotte told her that ſhe had waſhed it enough, ſhe ſtill continued, as if ſhe thought that it was better to waſh it too much than too little. I confeſs to you, my friend, that I never attended a chriſtening with greater reſpect; and, when Charlotte came up the ſteps, I could willingly have proſtrated myſelf before her, as before a prophet who had juſt expiated the ſins of a people.

In the evening, I could not refrain, in the joy of my heart, from relating this little adventure to a perſon who, becauſe he has wit, I was willing to believe was poſſeſſed of common ſenſe. How groſsly was I miſtaken! He told me that Charlotte had acted very imprudently; that it was wrong to inſpire children with ſuch ridiculous ideas, which gave birth to an infinity of ſuperſtitious errors, that it would be difficult to eradicate. I then recollected that, about a week before, one of his own children had been chriſtened; and therefore purſued my remarks no farther. I felt, however, an internal conviction of this important truth—That we ſhould deal with children as God deals with us: he makes our chief happineſs conſiſt in ſuffering our minds to be amuſed by the pleaſing uncertainty of flattering opinions.

LETTER XVI.

JULY 8.

WHAT a child am I! Why ſhould I ſigh, with ſo much ardour, after a ſingle look! What a mere child! We went to Walheim, the other day: the women were in a carriage; and, during the ride, I thought I perceived Charlotte's fine eyes——Pardon me, my friend, I am half mad—you

* All the ſubſequent part of this letter has been omitted by former tranſlators; for what reaſon, it is difficult to form a conjecture. It is probable, however, that they miſtook the ſenſe of the author; and aſcribed to him ideas, which his expreſſions are by no means calculated to ſupport. E. T.

ſhould

ſhould have ſeen thoſe eyes!—But let me be brief, for I am half aſleep. The women were in the coach; and W——, Selſtadt, and Audran, were talking to them at the window. The young men were gay, and full of ſpirits. I watched Charlotte's eyes with the utmoſt attention; they wandered from one to the other; but I—I who ſtood motionleſs as a ſtatue, and blind to all but her—was not favoured with a ſingle glance. My heart bade her a thouſand adieus, and not a look returned it's ſalutations. The coach drove off, and I felt a tear ready to ſtart. I followed her with my eyes. She put her head out at the window, and looked back. Alas! was it at me ſhe looked? I know not. It might be ſo. There is conſolation in the thought. Perhaps—— Good night. Oh! what a child am I!

LETTER XVII.

JULY 10.

I Wiſh you could ſee how fooliſh I look whenever her name is mentioned in company; eſpecially when I am aſked, if ſhe *pleaſes* me? *Pleaſes!* What a deteſtable expreſſion! Of what materials muſt that man be compoſed, whom Charlotte is barely capable of *pleaſing!* He muſt be the veriеſt ſlave of apathy, who can reſiſt her charms, and not reſign his every ſenſe, his every faculty, to their deſpotick influence. *Pleaſes!* I was lately aſked by one of theſe ſtupid fellows, whether Oſſian *pleaſed* me?

LETTER XVIII.

JULY 13.

NO, I am not miſtaken—I read in her eyes the intereſt I have in her heart. Yes, I feel, and every impulſe of my boſom confirms the flattering idea, that ſhe——Dare I pronounce a word ſo pregnant with inexpreſſible bliſs! Yes, I feel that ſhe loves me.

Is it the preſumption of vanity, or the conſciouſneſs of truth? I know not a man who poſſeſſes ſufficient influence over the heart of Charlotte, to afford me the ſmalleſt uneaſineſs. And yet, when ſhe ſpeaks of her intended huſband with all the warmth and tenderneſs of a ſettled affection, I find myſelf in the ſame ſituation as a man who is degraded from his rank, deprived of his power, and compelled to deliver up his ſword.

LETTER XIX.

JULY 16.

HOW my heart palpitates, and the raging blood boils in my veins, when by chance I touch her hand! When my feet accidentally come in contact with hers, I retreat with precipitation as from a fire; but a ſecret and irreſiſtible power again impels me forward. Such is the delirium that has taken poſſeſſion of all my ſenſes. Alas! the ſimple innocence and perfect freedom of her mind prevent her from feeling the torments which theſe privations, apparently ſo trifling, make me experience.

When ſhe places her hand upon mine, and in the eagerneſs of converſation draws ſufficiently near to me for her balmy breath to reach my lips, the ſudden effect of lightning on the human frame is not more potent. This celeſtial bliſs, my friend, this ingenuous confidence, ſhould I never dare to—— You underſtand me. No, my heart is not ſo corrupted. It is weak indeed, very weak! But may not that be deemed corruption?

I conſider her as a ſuperior being. Every deſire vaniſhes in her preſence. When I am near her, I feel as if my ſoul were expanded beyond it's uſual limits; as if my body were purified from all the groſſer ſenſations of it's mortal ſtate. There is an air which ſhe plays on the harpſichord with all the energy of an angel; it is her favourite air; and is ſo ſimple and expreſſive, that, the moment ſhe begins it, all my cares and ſorrows are at an end.

The charming ſimplicity of this tune affects me ſo ſenſibly, that I can eaſily give credit to all the magick wonders ſaid to be performed by the muſick of the ancients. Aware of the power it has over my ſenſes, ſhe has recourſe to it whenever ſhe obſerves the deep gloom of deſpair ſeated on my brow; in a moment the diſmal cloud is diſpelled, and my ſoul is reſtored to tranquillity.

LETTER XX.

JULY 18.

WHAT is the whole world to our hearts, my friend, without love! It is a magick lantern without light! No ſooner

ſooner is it illuminated, than your wall is covered with the whimſical figures it contains. And if love was only capable of affording ſuch tranſient ſhadows, ſtill would they conſtitute our happineſs, ſo long as the pleaſing phantoms could occupy our minds. I was prevented, by company that I could not avoid, from ſeeing Charlotte to-day: I therefore ſent my boy to enquire after her health, merely that I might have ſome one near me who had lately been in her preſence. With what impatience did I wait his return! with what joy did I receive him! I could willingly have ſmothered him with kiſſes, if I had not been prevented by ſhame.

The famous ſtone of Bologna, when expoſed to the ſun, is ſaid to attract it's rays; and ſo to retain them, that it can itſelf reflect a conſiderable light for ſome time after it is removed into the dark. The boy was the ſame to me; the idea that Charlotte's eyes had dwelt on his features, rendered them ſo dear, ſo precious to my ſoul, that I would not at that moment have parted with him for a thouſand crowns; I was ſo delighted with him! Do not laugh at me, my friend; for, be aſſured that nothing can be deemed an illuſion which contributes to our happineſs.

LETTER XXI.

JULY 19.

WHEN I awake in the morning, and, with a mind ſerene as the azure ſky, raiſe my eyes towards the ſun, I exclaim—'This day I ſhall ſee 'her! I ſhall ſee her!' and I have no other wiſh to form for the whole day. That ſingle idea abſorbs all my faculties.

LETTER XXII.

JULY 20.

I Cannot yet approve your ſcheme of ſending me with the ambaſſador of ———. I am not fond of dependence; and we all know that he is a very diſagreeable man to form any kind of connection with. You tell me my mother is anxious to ſee me employed: the idea makes me laugh; am I not already employed? That point eſtabliſhed, the object of employment muſt be perfectly indifferent. It matters not whether I ſhell peaſe, or count money. All worldly purſuits are equally vain and inſignificant; and the man who, not in obedience to the impulſe of his own mind, but in mere compliance with the caprice of another, torments himſelf with the accumulation of riches, or the attainment of honours, is in my opinion a madman.

LETTER XXIII.

JULY 24.

AS you intereſt yourſelf ſo deeply about my progreſs in drawing, it would be better, perhaps, to be ſilent on the ſubject, than to tell you that, for a long time paſt, I have ſcarcely done any thing.

Never was I in a more happy diſpoſition; never more ſtrongly impreſſed with juſt ideas of the various beauties of nature; and yet—I know not how to expreſs myſelf—my executive powers have forſaken me; every thing ſeems to ſwim before my ſight; to ſuch a degree, that I am unable to trace a ſingle outline. I think I ſhould ſucceed better in relief. If this diſorder of my ſenſes ſhould continue, I'll get ſome clay, and work on it, though I ſhould be able to produce nothing but bricks.

I have thrice endeavoured to take Charlotte's picture, and have as often failed in the attempt. I know not how it is—not long ago, I was peculiarly ſucceſsful in taking likeneſſes. I have, however, taken a ſhade of her; and that muſt content me.

LETTER XXIV.

JULY 26.

I Have frequently formed a reſolution to make my viſits to Charlotte leſs frequent; but ſuch reſolutions are more eaſily adopted than obſerved: every day I yield to the temptation, and make a determination not to go the next; but, when the next day arrives, ſome irreſiſtible reaſon again preſents itſelf, and I find myſelf at her houſe before I know where I am. 'What are theſe potent 'reaſons?' ſay you. I'll tell you. When we part in the evening, ſhe ſays, 'We ſhall 'ſee you to-morrow.' After that, who could refrain! Or elſe the day is too fine to think of ſtaying in the houſe. I therefore ſtray to Walheim; and, when I am once there, it is but half a league beyond,

beyond, and I am gone too far not to proceed. I remember my grandmother's ſtory of the mountain of loadſtone; when any veſſel came within a certain diſtance of it, out flew all the nails from her ſides, and the unhappy crew were cruſhed beneath the disjointed planks.

LETTER XXV.

JULY 30.

ALBERT is arrived; I muſt therefore depart. Were he the beſt, the moſt perfect of men; were I compleatly ſenſible of my own inferiority, I could not bear to ſee him in poſſeſſion of ſo much beauty, ſo much excellence. I have ſeen him; he appears to be a worthy man, to whom one cannot refuſe a certain portion of eſteem. Fortunately, I was not preſent at his reception, it would have rent my heart; and he has been civil enough, hitherto, wholly to reſtrain his fondneſs for Charlotte in my preſence. Heaven reward him for it! I cannot but eſteem him for the reſpect he entertains for her. He has alſo expreſſed a regard for me, which I rather attribute to the kindneſs of Charlotte, than to the ſuggeſtions of his own mind. Women are always delicate on that point, and they are certainly in the right; when they can promote a friendſhip between rivals, they are ſure to derive advantage from it: the attempt, therefore, is worth trying, though it ſeldom ſucceeds.

Seriouſly, I cannot withold my eſteem from Albert; his tranquil appearance forms a perfect contraſt with the turbulence of my diſpoſition, which diſplays itſelf in all my actions. He is, moreover, poſſeſſed of ſome ſenſibility, and ſeems to know the value of that treaſure which he poſſeſſes in the perſon of Charlotte. He appears, too, not in the ſmalleſt degree addicted to ill-humour; which, you know, of all vices, is that which I hold in the moſt thorough deteſtation.

He conſiders me as a man of ſound ſenſe; and my attachment to Charlotte, the deep regard I ſhew for every thing that relates to her, only ſerves to render his triumph compleat, and to increaſe the force of his affection. I know not, indeed, whether, in private, he may not torment her with his jealous apprehenſions; for, were I in his place, I ſhould not be perfectly at my eaſe. But, be that as it may, the pleaſure I enjoyed in the preſence of Charlotte is now at an end. Shall I call it madneſs, or infatuation? The name matters not; the thing is ſufficiently evident. I knew, before Albert's arrival, all that I now know: I knew that I could have no pretenſions to her; nor did I form any, except ſuch deſires as charms ſo potent muſt infallibly create—and yet, here am I, loſt in amazement, and ſtaring like an ideot, becauſe another has taken her from me! I deſpiſe myſelf for my folly; but I ſhould deſpiſe ſtill more the man who could enter into a grave argument, in order to convince me that, ſince no remedy was to be procured, I ſhould act with becoming reſolution; and—— Oh! the devil take all reaſoners! I wander about the woods; and, when I approach Charlotte's ruſtick habitation, and ſee her ſitting in the arbour at the bottom of the garden, with Albert by her ſide, I am fixed to the ſpot, I am ſeized with a ſpecies of frenzy, and play a thouſand ridiculous tricks. 'For Heaven's ſake!' ſaid Charlotte to-day, 'let us have 'no more ſuch ſcenes as that which you 'exhibited laſt night; your gaiety is tru-'ly alarming.' Between ourſelves, my friend, I have lately thought it prudent to watch Albert's motions; and, when I hear he is engaged in buſineſs, I pay my viſits to Charlotte: when I find her alone, I am always happy.

LETTER XXVI.

AUG. 8.

BELIEVE me, my dear friend, when I wiſhed all reaſoners at the devil, I was far from alluding to you; indeed I had no idea that you was one of them. But, in fact, you are right. One word only—in this world, matters ſeldom depend on a ſimple alternative; there are as many ſhades between our different ſentiments and motives of action, as there are gradations between a flat noſe and an aquiline noſe.

You will not be diſpleaſed, if, admitting the full force of your argument, I endeavour to ſave myſelf by the doctrine of alternatives. 'Either you have 'hopes of obtaining Charlotte,' ſay you, 'or you have none. In the firſt caſe, en-'deavour to fulfil thoſe hopes, and ſpare 'no pains to promote their gratification. 'In the ſecond caſe, exert your courag 'and baniſh from your mind that unha

'py paſſion which can only be pro-
'ductive of ſorrow and deſpair.' My dear friend, all this is very proper; and, what is ſtill more, very ſoon ſaid.

Could you require of a man, oppreſſed by ſome languiſhing diſeaſe that is inſenſibly undermining his conſtitution, to have recourſe to a dagger for the more ſpeedy termination of his miſeries? Does not the ſame diſorder that exhauſts his bodily ſtrength, deprive him of that mental reſolution which would be requiſite to get rid of it by the application of ſo deſperate a remedy? It is true, indeed, you might reply to my argument by a ſimilar compariſon; you might aſk me, 'Where is the man who would refuſe to 'loſe a limb, were his life to be endan-'gered by delaying the amputation?' I know not. But let us quit compariſons. Believe me, my friend, there are moments when I feel ſufficient courage to ſave myſelf from miſery by flight; and, if I knew whither to go, I ſhould then willingly depart.

LETTER XXVII.

AUG. 10

WERE I not a madman, I might lead the moſt pleaſant and comfortable life that a mortal could wiſh for, in my preſent ſituation. Seldom is ſuch a fortunate combination of circumſtances to be found ſo truly adapted to conſtitute the happineſs of man. But, alas! I feel too ſenſibly, that happineſs depends ſolely on the mind! To be conſidered as forming a part of the moſt amiable family in the world; to be beloved by the father as a ſon, by the children as a father, and by Charlotte too: and the worthy Albert, who does not interrupt my peace by any ill-timed effuſions of fondneſs; who profeſſes the moſt ſincere and cordial friendſhip, and prefers me to every body but Charlotte herſelf!—You would be delighted to hear us converſe together as we walk, when Charlotte is the ſubject of our diſcourſe. Nothing can be more truly ridiculous than our ſituation; and yet it often brings tears into my eyes.

When he talks to me of Charlotte's worthy mother; when he gives me a deſcription of her laſt moments, and the affecting ſcene that occurred previous to her diſſolution, when ſhe reſigned her houſe and family to her daughter; when he tells me how that amiable girl immediately changed her childiſh occupations for the more ſerious employments of a mother, every ſubſequent hour of her life being diſtinguiſhed by ſome proof of her friendſhip; or ſome production of her induſtry, and yet ſtill preſerving her native chearfulneſs and vivacity—I walk by his ſide, gather flowers by the way, and arrange them with great care in the form of a noſegay—then I throw them into the firſt brook, and ſtop to obſerve how they gradually ſink to the bottom.

I know not whether I told you, in my laſt letter, that Albert means to eſtabliſh his reſidence here. He has good intereſt at court; and has therefore obtained the promiſe of a place that will bring him in a comfortable income. I never met with a man who paid cloſer attention to buſineſs.

LETTER XXVIII.

AUG. 12.

ALBERT is indiſputably one of the beſt creatures in the world. I had a very ſingular converſation with him yeſterday, which I muſt relate to you. I went to take leave of him; for I had determined to change the ſcene by paſſing ſome days on the neighbouring mountains, from whence I now write to you. As I was walking up and down his apartment, I perceived his piſtols, and requeſted he would lend them me for my journey. 'You are very welcome to 'them,' ſaid Albert, 'if you will take 'the trouble to load them, for they are 'only hung there *pro formâ*.' I took up one; and he continued—'My pre-'caution was once very near being at-'tended with fatal effects; ſince that 'time, therefore, I have determined to 'have nothing to do with loaded piſ-'tols.' This excited my curioſity, which I deſired him to gratify. 'I paſſed ſix 'months,' ſaid he, 'ſome time ago, 'with a friend in the country; and had 'always ſlept in perfect ſecurity, though 'my piſtols were not loaded, till one 'rainy afternoon, when, having nothing 'to do, and being infected with the 'ſpleen, it occurred to me that we 'might poſſibly be attacked in the night, 'and my piſtols become of uſe. I there-'fore gave them to my ſervant, and or-'dered him to clean and load them. The

'blockhead

'blockhead took them down ſtairs; and, 'in attempting to frighten the maid, 'one of them went off; and the ram-'rod, which was in the barrel at the 'time, for he had not yet put in the 'ball, ſtruck againſt her hand, and broke 'her thumb. Beſides the uneaſineſs 'which this accident occaſioned me, I 'had the ſurgeon's bill to pay. Since that 'time, I have never kept any loaded 'fire-arms in my houſe. Alas! my 'friend, vain is all the precaution of 'man; he cannot avert the danger that 'threatens him!'

Still, you muſt know, I like this man; even his *falſe logick* do I like. In fact, is it not a ſelf-evident truth, that every general rule has it's exceptions? But Albert is ſo ingenuous, and ſo fearful of giving offence, that, whenever he advances an aſſertion which he thinks either doubtful or too general, he continues to modify and extenuate, till no part of the original hypotheſis remains. The preſent opportunity was favourable for the diſplay of this ſingular talent; and he accordingly immerged himſelf ſo deeply in the ſubject, that I could no longer attend to him; but fell into a reverie, that laſted till the end of his argument; when, riſing haſtily from my ſeat, I clapped the mouth of the piſtol to my forehead. 'What are you doing?' ſaid Albert, ſnatching the piſtol from my hand. 'Why, it is not charged.'—'Sup-'poſe it is not,' replied he, with a tone of impatience; 'I cannot conceive 'how a man can ever be mad enough to 'blow out his own brains: the very idea 'petrifies me with horror!'

'Why,' ſaid I, 'cannot a man 'calmly deliver his opinion of an action, 'without raſhly deciding on it's merits, 'before he has duly inveſtigated the ſe-'cret motives that ſuperinduced it's com-'miſſion? Could you diſtinguiſh the ſe-'cret operations of the human mind, and 'trace every effect to it's original ſource, 'you would be more cautious in your 'deciſions.'

'You muſt own,' replied Albert, 'that there are certain actions which 'muſt be deemed vicious, from whatever 'motives they proceed.' I ſhrugged up my ſhoulders, in aſſent to his poſition. 'Still, my friend,' ſaid I, 'even 'this rule is not without it's exceptions.' 'That theft is a vice, cannot be denied; 'but is the man whom the ſtrong call of 'neceſſity impels to commit it, who 'takes from his neighbour that ſuper-'fluous droſs, which is deſtined to ſave 'himſelf and family from periſhing 'through want; is that man an object 'of puniſhment or of compaſſion? Who 'ſhall dare be the firſt to condemn the 'huſband, who in a tranſport of ungo-'vernable rage, ſacrifices to a juſt re-'ſentment a faithleſs wife, and the baſe 'deſpoiler of his honour? What man 'will be bold enough to ſtand forth the 'accuſer of a youthful maiden, who 'in a moment of voluptuous frenzy, 'when the feelings of nature riſe ſupe-'rior to the reſtraints of decorum, and 'the whole ſoul is melted into love, falls 'a victim to the faſcinating arts of an 'unprincipled ſeducer? Our very laws, 'thoſe cold pedants, in ſuch caſes relax 'their uſual ſeverity, and ſheathe the 'ſword of juſtice.'

'Your examples,' replied Albert, 'are not to the purpoſe; becauſe a man 'under the influence of paſſion is whol-'ly deſtitute of reaſon, and is conſe-'quently conſidered in the light of a 'drunkard, or a madman.'—'Oh! ye 'men of unpolluted reaſon!' I exclaimed, with a ſmile; 'ye can view, with all 'the ſteady calmneſs of apathy, the 'dreadful effects of paſſion, ebriety, 'and madneſs!—Ye men of uncorrupted 'manners, ye can cenſure the drunkard; 'can look with horror on the ſlave of 'paſſion! Ye paſs on, on the other ſide, 'like the Prieſt; and, like the Phariſee, 'ye thank God that ye are not like one 'of theſe!

'More than once have I been in a 'ſtate of intoxication, and my paſſions 'have often bordered on frenzy; but this 'is a circumſtance better calculated to 'excite pleaſure than to enforce repen-'tance, ſince it has taught me why 'every man, who has undertaken any 'extraordinary operation, the execution 'of which appeared impoſſible to the 'multitude, has been deemed either a 'drunkard or a madman. And is it not 'inſupportable, even in private life, to 'hear every noble or generous action 'branded with the malevolent appella-'tion of madneſs or ebriety? Oh! bluſh, 'bluſh, ye ſages of the earth, who are 'ſtrangers to ſuch inſanity! to ſuch in-'toxication!'—'Now you are launching 'out into your uſual extravagance,' ſaid Albert. 'You are ever in extremes; at 'leaſt, you are certainly wrong, now, 'to compare ſuicide to heroiſm; for

'suicide is indisputably a proof of weakness, it being much easier to die than to support a life of misery with firmness and fortitude.'

I was here on the point of breaking off the conversation; for nothing so soon deprives me of my patience, as to hear a man oppose, to an argument that springs from the heart, some commonplace maxim that has no earthly signification. I contained myself, however; for it was not the first time my indignation had been excited by a similar observation. 'Can you really consider 'suicide as a weakness?' I replied, with some warmth. 'Do not suffer 'yourself to be seduced by appearances. 'Were a nation, who had long groaned 'beneath the oppressive yoke of a tyrant, at length awakened to a just sense 'of their misery; and, by a glorious 'exertion, to burst their ignominious 'chains; would you call that a weakness? The man who, endued by 'fear with extraordinary strength, lifts 'with ease, while his house is on fire, 'burdens which he could scarcely move 'when his mind was in a state of tranquillity; he who, rendered furious by 'insult, attacks and puts to flight half 'a dozen of his enemies; can these 'men be accused of weakness? If the 'man who can bend a bow be called 'strong, why should another who can 'break it receive a contrary appellation?' Albert looked me stedfastly in the face, and said—'I must confess, 'that to me your examples appear 'wholly inapplicable to the subject.'—'That may be,' said I: 'my logick 'has frequently been accused of absurdity. Let us, however, attempt 'to represent this matter in another 'point of view, that we may discover 'what are the real sentiments of a man 'who resolves to lay down the burden 'of life, which in all other situations 'he is so anxious to sustain; for, unless 'we thoroughly comprehend the subject, we cannot possibly argue on it 'with any degree of pertinence.

'Human nature,' continued I, 'has 'it's limits: it can support a certain 'degree of joy, sorrow, and pain; but, 'beyond that, it must inevitably sink. 'We are not, therefore, to enquire, 'whether a man be strong or weak; 'but, whether he be able to sustain the 'portion of evil, either mental or corporeal, which falls to his share: and, 'in my opinion, it would be as absurd 'to call the man a coward who puts an 'end to his own existence, as it would 'be to bestow that appellation on one 'who dies of a fever.'

'Paradox! mere paradox!' exclaimed Albert. 'Not so paradoxical as you 'may imagine,' replied I. 'You will 'allow that every disease is called mortal, in which Nature is so far exhausted, that she has not sufficient strength 'to operate a favourable change, in order to bring herself back to her accustomed path. Let us apply this to the 'mind. Consider man, confined within 'his narrow bounds; trace the operations of his ideas; mark the force of 'impressions on his mind; see them raise 'in his heart a passion, whose raging 'violence first deprives him of the use 'of reason, and then consigns him to 'destruction. It is in vain that a man 'of sound understanding and cool temper contemplates the situation of so 'wretched a being; it is in vain he 'attempts to inspire him with courage; 'like the man in perfect health, who 'sits by the bed of a sick friend, without being able to communicate to him 'the smallest portion of his strength.'

Albert thought my arguments too general. I adduced the instance of a young girl who had been lately found dead in the river, and related her story.

'An innocent young creature, who 'had never strayed from the narrow 'circle of her domestick employments, 'and whose daily occupations confined 'her constantly to the house; whose 'sole pleasure consisted in decorating 'her person on a Sunday with the produce of her industry, and walking, 'with her rustick companions, in the 'neighbouring fields; whose highest 'luxury was a dance on particular 'holidays, and an hour's chat with a 'friend on the scandal or disputes of 'the village: whom the warmth of her 'constitution at length awaking from 'a state of indifference to a sense of 'passions that demand gratification—'passions which the flattering praises of 'the men only tend to enflame—'finds all the innocent enjoyment of 'her earlier days tasteless and insipid. 'She soon meets with a man, to whom 'a sentiment, hitherto unknown to her 'bosom, attaches her with irresistible

'force,

'force. In him all her hopes are immediately centered: forgetful of the whole world, he becomes the ſole object of her attention,' the ſole object of her wiſhes. Uncorrupted by the vain pleaſures of inconſtancy, her deſires haſten to their deſtined goal. She is anxious to become his wife: ſhe expects to find, in an indiſſoluble union, the happineſs ſhe aſpires to; and to realize the flattering pleaſures of her imagination. Repeated vows, tending to the confirmation of her hopes; bold careſſes, augmenting the ardour of her paſſion; now abſorb her whole ſoul. The joys of anticipation overwhelm her with delight; her ſenſes are worked up to the higheſt pitch of expectation. When, at laſt, ſhe extends her arms to claſp the dear object of her deſires, the deluſion vaniſhes—her lover forſakes her! Petrified with amazement and conſternation, ſhe finds herſelf on the brink of a precipice; all around is darkneſs; no ſoothing proſpect, no conſolation, no hope—ſhe is forſaken by the only being who could render exiſtence dear to her! She ſees not the vaſt univerſe which lies before her; ſhe ſees not the many thouſands that might repair her loſs; ſhe only perceives herſelf, alone, and abandoned by the whole world. Thus infatuated, thus impelled, by the poignant ſorrows of her heart, ſhe plunges headlong into the watry deep, and ſeeks for repoſe in the boſom of Death!

'Such, Albert, is the lamentable hiſtory of many a child of Miſery! And is not this a ſimilar caſe with that of ſickneſs? Nature has no avenue by which ſhe can eſcape from the combined powers that tend to exhauſt her, and death muſt infallibly enſue. Periſh the man who could have ſaid, contemplating that hapleſs victim—"Fool that ſhe was! Had ſhe waited "with patience and reſignation, Time "would have blunted the keen edge of "Deſpair, her affliction would have "gradually diminiſhed, and a new lover "would ſoon have afforded her conſo-"lation!" As well might you ſay—"An idiot! He died of a fever! Had "he but waited till he had recovered "his ſtrength, and the tumult of his "blood had ſubſided, all would have "been well, and he would have been "ſtill alive!"

Albert, who would not admit the juſtice of my compariſon, ſtarted ſeveral objections; and, among others, alledged that I had only adduced the example of a young, ignorant girl. He ſaid he could not conceive what excuſe could be offered for a man of ſenſe and education, whoſe ideas, being more extended, rendered him capable of diſcovering greater ſources of conſolation. 'My good friend,' ſaid I, 'man is man; and 'the little portion of ſuperior ſenſe that 'may be allotted him, the trifling advantages he may derive from education, will prove but of little avail 'when the impetuous torrent of paſſion 'is let looſe, and he finds himſelf con-'fined within the circumſcribed limits 'of humanity. Nay, more—— But 'we will talk of that another time,' ſaid I, taking up my hat. Alas! my heart was ſo full! We parted without having rendered ourſelves intelligible to each other, as is too often the caſe in this world.

LETTER XXIX.

AUG. 15.

IT is very certain that nothing renders us ſo neceſſary to each other as love. I ſee that Charlotte would not loſe me without regret: and, as to the children, whenever I leave them, they take it for granted they ſhall ſee me again on the morrow.

I went to-day to tune Charlotte's harpſichord; but I could not accompliſh it, for the children all flocked about me, and inſiſted on my telling them a Fairy-tale; and Charlotte begged I would comply with their requeſt. I firſt cut them their bread and butter, which they now take from me as cordially as from their ſiſter; and then related the firſt chapter of the Princeſs that was ſerved by Dwarfs. You cannot think how much I improve by this exerciſe; and the impreſſions which my ſtories make on their young minds is really aſtoniſhing. If I repeat a ſtory that I have told them before, and omit any particular incident, they are ſure to remind me of it, by ſaying—'It is not the ſame 'now as it was the firſt time.' So that I now accuſtom myſelf to tell my ſtories invariably in the ſame manner; and even to obſerve, as nearly as poſſible, the ſame

tone

tone of voice. This has convinced me of the impolicy of making alterations in a work after it's publication; though, by ſo doing, the work be evidently improved. Firſt impreſſions are ever the ſtrongeſt: whether they owe their force to reaſon or credulity, is of little importance; their influence on the mind is ſo powerful, that an attempt to deſtroy it will ſeldom meet with ſucceſs, and never incur commendation.

LETTER XXX.

AUG. 18.

WAS it, then, neceſſary to ordain, that the happineſs and miſery of man ſhould proceed from the ſame ſource? That exquiſite ſenſibility which opened my heart to the ſublimeſt emotions of joy at the contemplation of animated nature; which overwhelmed my ſenſes with a torrent of delight, and raiſed an imaginary paradiſe around me; is now converted into a gloomy fiend, a malignant ſpirit, who poiſons every ſource of pleaſure, and racks me with inceſſant torment.

Erſt, from the ſummit of a lofty rock, I ſtretched my eager ſight beyond the river's fertile banks, to contemplate the verdant hills and cultivated plain. I beheld with joy the vegetative world; the mountains, covered to their tops with high and tufted trees; the vallies ſhaded, through their various windings, with ſmiling woods. The peaceful ſtream gently glided through the trembling reeds; and, in it's unpolluted ſurface, reflected the light clouds, which a ſoft murmuring breeze kept ſuſpended in the air. I heard the feathered ſongſters animate the grove; while myriads of inſects fluttered in the purple gleam produced by the laſt rays of the ſetting ſun; at whoſe departure the cock-chaffer, pleaſed at the mild approach of ſober Eve, began his wary flight. Even the hard rocks and arid ſands exerted their vegetative powers, and afforded nouriſhment to the creeping moſs and bearded thiſtle.

Theſe numerous objects, which filled my ſoul with tranſports of delight, diſcovered to my view the ſacred ſource of that prolifick heat which, iſſuing from the womb of Nature, animates the whole creation. I was loſt in the contemplation of their infinity; and their majeſtick forms ſeemed to exiſt in my mind. I was encompaſſed by ſtupendous mountains; dreadful abyſſes opened before me, into which the roaring torrents plunged; rivers rolled at my feet; and my ears were aſſailed by the tremendous noiſe of woods and mountains echoing with the varied ſounds.

I witneſſed the action and re-action of theſe impenetrable forces, formed in the depths of the earth. On the ſurface of that earth, and in the liquid air, move, beneath a thouſand various forms, all animated nature; while man, ſecreted in his little hut, ſtruts, the imaginary lord of the univerſe. Poor fool that thou art! to judge of all things by thy own littleneſs! From the inacceſſible mountain to the lonely deſart yet untraced by human footſteps; to the extreme boundary of ſeas yet unexplored; all, all is animated by the breath of the Eternal Creator, who views with pleaſure every grain of duſt that owes it's exiſtence to him. Alas! how often has the flight of the crane, paſſing over my head, inſpired my ſoul with an ardent deſire to traverſe the infinite extent of ſpace; that I might tranſport myſelf to the regions of eternal happineſs; there to drink of the ever-flowing nectar of life from the cup of the Almighty; and to taſte for a ſingle moment, as far as the circumſcribed powers of my mind would permit me, of the ineffable bliſs of that Supreme Being whoſe fiat is omnipotent!

The bare recollection of thoſe happy hours ſtill affords me pleaſure. The joy which I experience in recalling thoſe daring efforts of the mind, thoſe inexplicable ſenſations; and in talking of them to you, my friend; exalts my ſoul above itſelf, and gives double force to the anguiſh I now feel. The veil is removed from my mind, and Eternity now preſents itſelf to my ſight in the ever-open abyſs of the tomb. Can we ſay of any thing, that it exiſts; when all paſſes away with the rapidity of lightning; when ſcarcely a ſingle being arrives at the end of that career which he ſeemed endowed with ſufficient ſtrength to attain; but, borne away by the reſiſtleſs torrent of Time, he either ſinks to the bottom, or is dathed againſt the rocks. There is not a ſingle moment but is pregnant with deſtruction; every inſtant even we ourſelves are deſtined to deſtroy; every walk we take deprives of their exiſtence myriads of inſects; a ſingle ſtep deſtroys

deſtroys the curious fabrick of the induſtrious ant, and cruſhes a whole pigmy world. Alas! it is not the great and extraordinary revolutions of the globe, thoſe inundations that ſweep away our villages, thoſe earthquakes which ſwallow up our towns; it is not ſuch objects that affect me: the cauſe of my ſorrow is that deſtructive power which, though concealed, is inherent in all things: there exiſts not a ſingle animated body but contains within itſelf the principles of it's own diſſolution. It is thus I am continually perplexed with doubts: encompaſſed by all the beauties of the creation, I wander with an aching heart; and the whole univerſe preſents to my ſight but a fearful monſter, eternally occupied in devouring what it has regorged.

LETTER XXXI.

AUG. 20.

IN vain, at break of day, when I awake from an unpleaſing dream, do I extend my arms towards her: in vain do I ſeek her in my bed, when, deceived by a propitious dream, I fancy myſelf ſeated by her ſide in ſome flower-beſpangled mead, and preſſing her hand to my lips. Alas! when half ſunk in the ſoft lap of Slumber, I ſtill fondly imagine that I touch her; then, convinced of the deception, my oppreſſed heart ſeeks for relief in tears, and the gloomy proſpect before me fills my mind with deſpair.

LETTER XXXII.

AUG. 22.

SOME fatality attends me! All my active faculties are doomed to linger in reſtleſs indolence. I cannot remain idle, yet am wholly unable to do any thing. The powers of my mind are become torpid; I am inſenſible to the beauties of nature, and books inſpire me with diſguſt. How often do I wiſh I were a mechanick, that when I awake in the morning, I might have ſome object in view to occupy my thoughts for the day, and ſome hope for the morrow! How I envy Albert, when I ſee him entrenched up to the ears in papers and parchment! I am then induced to believe that, in his place, I ſhould be happy: and ſo thoroughly am I impreſſed with this idea, that I have been frequently tempted to write to the miniſter for the place which you have aſſured me I might obtain. Indeed, I think he could not refuſe me, as he has long profeſſed an eſteem for me, and has even told me that I ought to procure ſome employment. At times I feel myſelf inclined to purſue his advice; but, when I recollect the fable of the Horſe, who, tired of his liberty, ſuffered himſelf to be bridled and ſaddled, I am at a loſs how to act. To be candid, my dear friend: Do not you think that the ſame reſtleſs diſpoſition which makes me wiſh to change my ſituation, would equally purſue me in every ſtation of life?

LETTER XXXIII.

AUG. 28.

IF my diſorder would admit of a cure, I ſhould certainly find it here. This day is my birth-day; and, very early in the morning, I received a ſmall parcel from Albert. The firſt thing that ſtruck my ſight, when I opened it, was one of the roſe-coloured bows which Charlotte wore on her breaſt the firſt time I ſaw her, and which I had repeatedly aſked her to give me. Albert had incloſed two little volumes of Weiſtein's edition of Homer; which I had long wiſhed to have, that of Erneſti being too heavy to carry in my pocket when I take my walks.

Thus, my friend, you ſee how they anticipate my wiſhes; and kindly evince a ſolicitude to pay me all thoſe friendly attentions, which are infinitely more expreſſive of true friendſhip than munificent preſents, that can only tend to diſplay the vanity of the donor, and to humiliate the perſon who accepts them.

A thouſand times do I preſs this dear ribband to my lips, as it recalls to my mind thoſe ſhort days of happineſs which, alas! can return no more!

It is a truth, my friend—nor do I murmur that it is ſo—The bloſſoms of life are but tranſient and vain! How many of them fade away, nor leave the ſmalleſt trace of their exiſtence! How few are ſucceeded by merit! and how little of that merit arrives at maturity! Yet is there ſtill enough for our purpoſe. Should we, then, treat what remains with contempt; and, inſtead

of

of appropriating it to the uſe for which it is deſtined by the benevolent hand of the Creator, ſhould we ſuffer it to periſh and decay?

Adieu. The weather is delightful. I often amuſe myſelf by climbing the pear-trees in Charlotte's orchard; and, while I knock down the fruit, ſhe ſtands under the tree, and catches them in her apron.

LETTER XXXIV.

AUG. 30.

WRETCH that I am! to take a pleaſure in deceiving myſelf! Whither will this mad paſſion lead me? Charlotte is the ſole object of my devotions, the ſole companion of my ſolitary hours; and nothing in this world is capable of intereſting me, but as it relates to her. In this ſituation I ſtill enjoy ſome happy hours, till compelled to tear myſelf from her preſence; which, alas! the ſtrong emotions of my heart too often render neceſſary!

Sometimes, when I have been ſitting by her two or three hours together, feaſting my ſenſes on her charms, abſorbed in the ſublime contemplation of her perfections; my ſight becomes confuſed, my heart palpitates, my head turns round, and I am ſcarcely ſenſible of my exiſtence: and then, if my feelings do not totally deprive me of my ſtrength; if Charlotte will not allow me the melancholy conſolation of relieving my oppreſſed heart, by bathing her hand with my tears; I am under the neceſſity of leaving her, to wander about the fields. At thoſe times, I delight in climbing ſome rugged rock, or forcing a paſſage through ſome thick foreſt, amongſt thorns and briars, that wound and tear my fleſh: this affords me ſome relief. Sometimes, when overcome with fatigue, and dying with thirſt, I am unable to proceed; in the dead of night, when the full moon ſhines upon my head, I retire into the middle of a ſolitary wood, and climb a knotty tree, to repoſe my tired feet, where I ſlumber, reſtleſs, till the break of day.

Oh, my friend! the darkened cell, the robe of ſackcloth, the iron-pointed girdle, would be comforts, compared to the torments of my mind! Adieu. I ſee no end to theſe ſufferings, but in the grave!

LETTER XXXV.

SEPT. 3.

I Muſt quit this place. Thanks to you, my friend! my doubts are now diſpelled. A fortnight has elapſed ſince I firſt reſolved to leave her. It muſt be ſo. She is gone back to town, to pay a viſit to a friend. Albert is with her—— and—I muſt quit the place. It is a ſettled point.

LETTER XXXVI.

SEPT. 18.

WHAT a night, my friend! At preſent I can bear any thing. It is over. I ſhall ſee her no more! Oh! why cannot I fly to you, and, with a flood of tears, expreſs all the various paſſions that aſſail my heart! Here I am, loſt in amazement; endeavouring to collect my ſcattered ideas; and waiting for the break of day, when the poſt-horſes are to convey me far from hence.

Alas! Charlotte is now enjoying the refreſhing balm of ſleep, and little thinks that ſhe will never ſee me more! I tore myſelf away; and had reſolution enough not to betray my deſign during a converſation that laſted upwards of two hours—and ſuch a converſation, too!

Albert had promiſed to meet me in the garden, with Charlotte, immediately after ſupper. I was ſtanding on the terrace, under the lofty cheſnut-trees, looking at the ſetting ſun, that my eyes, for the laſt time, ſaw deſcend beneath this delightful valley. I had often viſited the ſame ſpot with Charlotte, and we had frequently contemplated the ſame glorious ſight. I walked up and down this walk, ſo dear to me! A ſecret ſympathetick force had often attracted and detained me there, even before I was acquainted with Charlotte; and it afforded us infinite pleaſure, when, in the dawn of our friendſhip, we diſcovered in each other a mutual predilection for this delightful ſpot, which is indeed one of the moſt pleaſing productions of art.

I remember to have mentioned to you, once before, the extenſive proſpect which the terrace commands; and I think that, at the ſame time, I gave you a full deſcription of all it's beauties. I told you of the long avenue of towering beech-

beech-trees, which becomes darker and darker as you approach the end of it; where is a receſs, formed by the thickeſt ſhrubs, and poſſeſſing all the charms of gloomy ſolitude. I ſtill feel the ſame melancholy ſenſation which I experienced the firſt time I entered this ſilent retreat; when my mind was ſtruck with a vague and confuſed preſage, that it was deſtined to be the ſcene of my future happineſs, and of my future miſery.

I had paſſed about half an hour in ſorrowful reflections on the uncertainty of human bliſs, when I heard them walking up the terrace. I inſtantly ran to meet them; and, ſeizing Charlotte's hand, kiſſed it with tranſport. As we reached the top of the terrace, we deſcried the moon riſing behind the wild ſhrubs that deck the mountain's top. We talked on different ſubjects till we found ourſelves at the end of the avenue; when Charlotte entered my favourite receſs, and ſat down. Albert placed himſelf on one ſide of her, and I on the other; but my mind was in too violent an agitation to remain long in the ſame ſpot. I aroſe, walked backwards and forwards; and then ſat down again, reſtleſs as a perturbed ſpirit. Charlotte made us obſerve the beautiful effect of the moon, ſhining on the terrace at the farther end of the avenue; which was rendered doubly ſtriking by the darkneſs that ſurrounded the ſpot on which we were ſeated.

We all obſerved a profound ſilence for ſome time, which was thus broken by her: 'I never walk by moon-light,' ſaid ſhe, 'without thinking of my de-'parted friends, and reflecting on death 'and a future ſtate. Yes,' continued ſhe, with a voice expreſſive of the moſt lively ſenſibility, 'we ſhall certainly 'exiſt hereafter.—But, Werter, ſhall 'we find each other again? ſhall we 'know each other? Tell me, what is 'your opinion of it?'—'Yes, Char-'lotte,' ſaid I, offering her my hand, as the tears ſtarted from my eyes, 'we 'ſhall meet again—we ſhall meet again, 'both here and hereafter!' I was unable to proceed. Alas! my friend, ſhould ſhe have put ſuch a queſtion to me, at a time when my heart was full at the thoughts of our approaching ſeparation?

'And are the dear departed objects 'of our affection,' ſaid ſhe, 'ſenſible 'of the pleaſure we experience in re-'calling their loved images to our minds? 'Alas! the ſhade of my mother hovers 'over me, when in the evening I am 'ſurrounded by her children; and ſee 'them croud about me, as they uſed to 'do about her! When I raiſe my fear-'ful eyes to heaven, and wiſh that, from 'her celeſtial abode, ſhe could look 'down upon us for an inſtant, and wit-'neſs my care religiouſly to fulfil that 'promiſe, which I made her in her laſt 'moments, to be a mother to her chil-'dren; how often do I then exclaim—"Pardon me, deareſt of parents! if I "am not to them all that thou wert! "Alas! all that I can, I do: they are "cloathed, they are fed; nay, more, "they are cheriſhed and beloved!—"Dear and bleſſed ſpirit! couldſt thou "behold their union, thou wouldſt offer "up a prayer of gratitude to that Being "whoſe mercy, in the hour of death, "thou invokedſt on thy children!" This ſhe ſaid, and more.—But it is impoſſible to do juſtice to her expreſſions; nor would the cold, unfeeling breaſt of Apathy, be affected by the celeſtial effuſions of Genius! She was about to proceed; but Albert gently interrupted her. 'My deareſt Char-'lotte,' ſaid he, 'your ſenſibility is too 'exquiſite: theſe recollections are, I 'know, dear to your ſoul; but, let me 'entreat you not to purſue them.'—'Oh, Albert!' ſaid ſhe, 'you do not 'forget, I am ſure you do not, thoſe 'tranquil evenings, when during the 'abſence of my father, after the chil-'dren had retired to reſt, we uſed to ſit 'round the fire, and enjoy the inſtruc-'tive converſation of that divine woman; 'the benevolence of whoſe mind corre-'ſponded to the placid ſerenity of her 'countenance; and whoſe activity in the 'diſcharge of her domeſtick duties was 'invariably marked by chearfulneſs and 'content! God knows how often I 'have humbled myſelf before him, and 'prayed that I might be like her!'

I threw myſelf at her feet; and, taking her hand, which I bathed with my tears, exclaimed—'Charlotte, Charlotte, 'the benediction of the Almighty attends 'you, and the pure ſpirit of your mother 'protects you!'—'If you had but known 'her,' ſaid ſhe, preſſing my hand—'ſhe 'was worthy of being known to you.' I was motionleſs; never had I received praiſe ſo truly flattering! 'And this

'woman,' continued she, 'was doomed 'to die in the flower of her age, before 'her youngest child was six months old. 'Her illness was short: she was all 'calmness and resignation; and the only 'anxiety she experienced, arose from her 'concern for the fate of her children; 'particularly for the youngest, whose 'infant state demanded extraordinary 'care. When she found her end approaching, she bade me bring them 'to her. I obeyed. The least of them 'were not sensible of the loss they were 'about to sustain; the others were so 'overcome with grief, that they were 'deprived of all sensation. I still see 'them round her bed; while, raising her 'feeble hands to heaven, their dying 'parent invoked the blessing of the Almighty on their heads. Then kissing 'them, one after the other, she took a 'last farewell; and sent them back, 'saying—"Charlotte, be thou a mother "to them." I held out my hand, in 'token of obedience. "You promise "much, my child," said she; "a mother's fondness, and a mother's care! "But the goodness of your heart convinces me that you will fulfil it all. "Shew such tenderness and affection to "your brothers and sisters, as I have "ever experienced from you. To your "father be kind and obedient as a wife: "you will be his comfort." She asked for him: he had retired, to conceal the 'anguish of his soul; his grief was 'more than he could bear.—Albert, 'you were in the room. She heard 'somebody move; and, when she saw 'who it was, desired you to come to 'her. With what satisfaction did she 'look on us both, with the pleasing 'idea that we should be happy together!' Albert took her in his arms, and exclaimed—'We are happy, Charlotte—'Yes, we shall be happy!' Even the cold, phlegmatick Albert, was moved! As for me, I was quite out of my senses!

'Werter,' said she, 'this divine wo'man is no more!—Almighty God! 'and must we be thus deprived of every 'thing we hold dear in the world!—'The children, who are more keenly 'affected by such a loss than any body, 'long continued their lamentations, and 'said that the Black Men had carried 'away their mamma!'

Charlotte arose. I was in a violent agitation; and continued sitting, holding her hand between mine. 'We must go,' said she; 'it is late.' She attempted to withdraw her hand, but I held it fast. 'We shall meet again,' said I: 'under 'whatever form it be, we shall know 'each other. I am going to leave you; 'but, if I thought it was for ever, the 'idea would be insupportable.—Adieu, 'Charlotte!—Adieu, Albert!—We shall 'meet again.'—'Yes; to-morrow, probably,' said she, smiling. That *To-morrow* struck to my heart. Alas! she knew not then——

They went down the avenue. I arose, and looked after them; then threw myself on the ground, and gave vent to my tears. When I got up, I ran to the terrace; and, looking down, saw, beneath the shade of the lime-trees, her white gown waving near the garden-gate. I extended my arms, and she disappeared!

LETTER XXXVII.

OCT. 20.

WE arrived here yesterday. The ambassador, being indisposed, means to remain here some days. Were he more affable, all would be well. I plainly perceive that Fate has reserved me for severe trials: but I will not suffer my spirits to droop; a man of an easy disposition can bear any thing. An *easy* disposition! don't you smile at the idea? Alas! a small portion of levity would render me the happiest of mankind! Shall I then mistrust my own abilities, when I see so many others who, without presumption, I may safely call my inferiors, proud of their endowments?—Great God! why didst thou not withhold a part of those talents; and, in their stead, endue me with firmness and confidence!—But patience and perseverance will, I trust, soon supply those deficiencies: for I am now, my friend, convinced of the truth of your remark; the more I see of the common herd of mankind, the greater reason do I find to be satisfied with myself. Since we are apt to appreciate ourselves merely by comparison, it certainly follows, that our happiness or misery depends on the objects that surround us. Nothing, therefore, can be more dangerous than solitude: there our imagination, by nature inclined to soar, and fed by the fantastick images of poetry,

creates

creates to itſelf a new order of beings, whoſe ſuperiority over ourſelves it is too apt to acknowledge. The human mind is ever conſcious of it's own imperfections*; while it not only magnifies the real endowments of others, but aſcribes to them qualities which they do not poſſeſs. On the other hand, when we oppoſe weakneſs by aſſiduity, and perſevere in the purſuit of our labours, we frequently find that we make more way, though retarded by continually tacking, than others who go right before the wind. Still, however, to entertain a juſt idea of his own value, a man ſhould think himſelf equal to all, and ſuperior to moſt.

* This aſſertion evidently contradicts a former remark. He has juſt before noticed the vanity of his aſſociates, who pride themſelves on endowments which they do not poſſeſs: how then can the operations of the human mind be always directed by a conſciouſneſs of it's own imperfections?——Our ignorance of the German language prevents us from haſtily imputing this error to the author; though we have ſtrong reaſon to believe the French tranſlation correct, and though former Engliſh tranſlators have preſerved it even without a comment. Werter, in aſſerting the mind's conſciouſneſs of it's own failings certainly ſpeaks as he *feels*; and from thence is betrayed into a groſs logical error, by drawing *general* concluſions from *particular* premiſes. E. T.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

THE

SORROWS OF WERTER.

VOLUME THE SECOND.

LETTER XXXVIII.

NOV. 10.

MY ſituation becomes, in many reſpects, tolerable. I am continually occupied; and the multitude of actors that ſurround me, with the different characters they aſſume, create a pleaſing variety in the ſcene. I have formed an acquaintance with Count C. who daily gains on my eſteem. He is a man of an extenſive genius and acute diſcernment; and our intimacy has given me occaſion to obſerve, that his heart is equally open to the impreſſions of love and the ties of friendſhip. He conceived a friendſhip for me the firſt time we met. I had ſome buſineſs to tranſact with him; and he perceived ſomething in my manner that induced him to lay aſide the ceremonial of form, and aſſume a familiarity which it might be dangerous to practiſe with others.

His affability and candour afford me the higheſt ſatisfaction. Indeed, I know not any thing capable of imparting greater pleaſure to a feeling breaſt, than the unreſerved confidence of a great mind.

LETTER XXXIX.

DEC. 24.

MY fears are realized. The ambaſſador's conduct is really inſupportable. He is the moſt punctilious blockhead I had ever the misfortune to meet with. His motions are as mechanical as thoſe of an antiquated virgin; and, as he is never ſatisfied with himſelf, it is wholly impoſſible that others ſhould pleaſe him.

I generally write with tolerable fluency, and what I do ſeldom requires correction: yet he frequently returns me a memorial, obſerving that it is well enough; but that reviſion is always neceſſary, as ſome better phraſe, or more apt expreſſion, will continually occur. At thoſe times, I am tempted to wiſh myſelf at the devil! He is ſo fond of connection, that he will not ſuffer a ſingle copulative conjunction to be omitted: and, on the contrary, he is an avowed enemy to all tranſpoſitions, which I not unfrequently make uſe of. If a period is not properly rounded, or poſſeſſes more force than harmony, it muſt be immediately altered. A man had better ſuffer martyrdom than have any connection with ſuch a being!

The friendſhip of Count C. is my only conſolation. He very frankly confeſſed to me, the other day, how much he was diſpleaſed with the extreme tardineſs and ſcrupulous circumſpection of the ambaſſador. Men of this deſcription are equally inſupportable to themſelves, and to all thoſe with whom they have any concern, 'And yet,' ſays he, 'it is 'neceſſary to reconcile ourſelves to the 'inconvenience, like the traveller who 'has a lofty mountain to paſs: if the 'mountain was removed, the road would 'certainly be ſmoother; but, ſince it is 'there, he muſt e'en climb over it.'

The old man perceives the Count's partiality

partiality for me; and the idea that I ſhould be preferred to him, only tends to augment his ill-humour, which he is ſtudious to vent, by ſpeaking diſreſpectfully of the Count in my preſence. The conſequence is, that I undertake his defence, and the breach between us daily widens.

Yeſterday my patience was quite exhauſted; for his reflections were not merely confined to my friend, but extended to me. 'The Count,' ſays he, 'is tolerably well verſed in the common 'affairs of the world. He writes with 'eaſe; and his ſtyle, too, is good; but 'he is as deficient in profound erudition 'as moſt of our modern literati.' I could willingly have caned him; for the *argumentum baculinum* is the only argument a man can poſſibly employ with ſuch an animal: but, as I was debarred from the uſe of that, I was forced to content myſelf with telling him, with ſome degree of warmth, that the Count was a man who had the ſtrongeſt claims to reſpect, as well from his character as underſtanding. 'I know not,' ſaid I, 'any man who, with a genius ſo truly 'ſublime, is ſo compleatly verſed in all 'the minutiæ of buſineſs.' This was algebra to him; but, while he was gaping for an explanation, I made my bow, leſt ſome freſh inſtance of his ſtupidity ſhould irritate me ſtill more.

It is you I have to thank for this pleaſant ſituation; it is you who bent my neck to the yoke of ſervitude, by continually preaching activity to me. Activity! If the man who plants potatoes, and carries his corn to market, is not more uſefully active than I am, may I work ten years longer at the oar to which I am now chained!

What ſplendid miſery and diſguſting laſſitude are viſible in the ſtupid ſocieties of this town! The rage for rank, that impels them to toil for precedence! Wretched and contemptible paſſion, which they do not even take the trouble to diſguiſe! There is a woman here, for example, whoſe pedigree and rental form the ſole topicks of her converſation. Any ſtranger, who heard her, would naturally ſuppoſe ſhe was ſome weak creature whoſe brain had been turned by the unlooked-for bequeſt of an eſtate, or the unexpected devolution of a title: and, to render the abſurdity more glaring, ſhe is but the daughter of a ſteward's ſecretary who lives in the neighbourhood. I cannot conceive how any human being can be ſo devoid of common ſenſe, as to render herſelf ſuch an object of contempt!

Daily experience convinces me of the extreme folly of regulating our actions by thoſe of others. For my part, both my heart and fancy are ſo impatient of reſtraint, that I would willingly permit others to purſue the path they have ſelected, if they would allow me the ſame indulgence. But I am moſt tormented with the ridiculous diſtinctions that prevail among the citizens. No man is more ſenſible of the neceſſity of that inequality of conditions that has been eſtabliſhed for the general good of ſociety than I am: and the advantages I derive from it myſelf, give it additional claims to my reſpect; but I would never ſuffer it to operate as an obſtacle to any earthly enjoyment.

I have lately formed an acquaintance with a Miſs B——, a moſt amiable girl, who has contrived to preſerve the unaffected freedom of nature, amidſt the pomp and pride that diſtinguiſh her aſſociates. The firſt time we met, we were mutually pleaſed with each other's converſation; and, when we parted, I requeſted her permiſſion to pay my reſpects to her at home. This ſhe accorded with ſuch a pleaſing frankneſs, that I had ſcarcely patience to wait till the proper hour for viſiting. She is not of this place, but reſides here at preſent with an aunt. The old woman's countenance was far from pleaſing: I paid her, however, every poſſible attention; directed almoſt the whole of my converſation to her; and, in leſs than half an hour, had diſcovered, what her niece has ſince acknowledged to be true, that in her old age, with a ſmall portion of wealth, and a ſmaller portion of underſtanding, ſhe enjoys no ſatisfaction but in the rank of her anceſtors; no protection but in the ſplendour of her birth; and no recreation but in contemplating from her window the ignoble crowd below.

She appears to have been formerly handſome, but her life has been trifled away. In her younger days, ſhe tormented many a hapleſs youth by her ridiculous caprice. In her maturer years, ſhe was content to accept the hand of an old officer, under whoſe rigid diſcipline ſhe experienced the rigours

gours of the brazen age. She is now in the iron age of widowhood; and would lead a life of perpetual ſolitude, but for the attractions of her niece.

LETTER XL.

JAN. 8.

WHAT contemptible beings are the inhabitants of this town, whoſe ſole ſtudy is the doctrine of forms, and who will devote a whole year to the ridiculous attempt of gaining a ſingle ſtep on the ladder of precedency! Nor does this proceed from a want of more uſeful occupations: on the contrary, it tends to multiply their labours, by commanding that attention which ought to be beſtowed on affairs of importance. One day laſt week, a grand party was formed for an expedition on the ice in ſledges; but, when every thing was ready, a trivial diſpute on a point of precedency prevented it from taking place.

Idiots! they are not aware that place alone does not conſtitute greatneſs; and that the man who enjoys the higheſt ſtation is often but a mere cypher! How many monarchs are governed by their miniſters! and how many miniſters are ruled by their ſecretaries! Who, then, is to be deemed the chief?—That man, certainly, who is endued with abilities ſuperior to thoſe of his aſſociates; and who is poſſeſſed of ſufficient power and addreſs to render both their talents and their paſſions ſubſervient to his own deſigns.

LETTER XLI.

JAN. 20.

I Now write to you, my dear Charlotte, from the ſcanty parlour of a country inn, whither a violent ſtorm has driven me for ſhelter. During my melancholy reſidence in the dreary town of D——, where I was continually ſurrounded by ſtrangers—ſtrangers indeed to my heart—no ſecret impulſe ever urged me to write to you. But, in this cottage, this ſolitary confinement, where the ſnow and hail batter my little window, you are the ſole object of my thoughts. The moment I entered, the ſacred recollection of your fair image, my Charlotte—a recollection not leſs ſalutary than impreſſive—occurred to my mind with irreſiſtible force. Gracious Heaven! this is the firſt happy moment I have experienced ſince I left you!

Could you but ſee me, my dear Charlotte, in that vortex of diſſipation to which I have been lately accuſtomed, my ſituation would excite your pity. All my ſenſes become callous. I never experience that fulneſs of heart which flows from exceſs of pleaſure; nor do I ſhed a ſingle tear of ſenſibility. I ſtand motionleſs, as the aſtoniſhed ſpectator of ſome curious piece of mechaniſm: I ſee the little puppets move before my ſight; and frequently aſk myſelf, if the whole ſcene be not a mere viſual illuſion. They become the objects of my amuſement; or, rather, I form the object of theirs: I lay hold of my neighbour's hand, find it is made of wood, and draw back my own with horror!

I have met but with one being here who has any thing feminine about her—a Miſs B. She reſembles you, my dear Charlotte, if it is poſſible for any thing to reſemble you. You will now, I know, accuſe me of having taken ſome leſſons in the School for Compliments; nor will your accuſation, indeed, be wholly unfounded. I have lately become extremely polite, not having yet been able to become any thing better. The women tell me I poſſeſs a great portion of wit; and that I excel in the art of complimenting:—'And of *lying*, 'too,' ſays Charlotte, 'for one always 'accompanies the other.'

But, to return to Miſs B. She is endued with a great ſhare of ſenſibility, which is forcibly expreſſed in her fine blue eyes. She is diſguſted with her preſent ſituation, which is incapable of gratifying any one wiſh of her heart. She abhors the tumult of a court; and we frequently indulge ourſelves for whole hours in delineating ſcenes of rural felicity. You are not forgotten in our converſations. I have made her acquainted with your virtues, and ſhe pays you due homage—not homage extorted by my enthuſiaſtick praiſe, but that homage which one virtuous mind voluntarily offers to another. In ſhort, Charlotte, ſhe knows you: it is needleſs, therefore, to add—ſhe loves you.

Oh, why am I thus diſtant from you! Why am I not ſeated by your ſide, with the dear little objects of your affection playing around us! If their noiſe became

came troubleſome to my Charlotte, I would huſh them to ſilence by the recital of one of Mother Gooſe's dreadful tales.

The ſun is now ſetting in brilliant majeſty; and his laſt rays, that ſhine on the white ſurface of the ſnow-clad earth, have diſpelled the raging ſtorm. I muſt return to my priſon. Adieu! Is Albert with you? and in what capacity? God forgive me for having aſked ſuch a queſtion!

LETTER XLII.

FEB. 17.

I Much fear that the ambaſſador and I ſhall not continue much longer together. He is become really inſupportable. His manner of tranſacting buſineſs is ſo truly ridiculous, that I cannot refrain from contradicting him; and frequently purſue the dictates of my own judgment, in oppoſition to his directions; which, of courſe, diſpleaſes him. Of this he lately made a complaint to the miniſter, from whom I received a reprimand; conveyed, indeed, in terms of mildneſs; but ſtill it was a reprimand; and I was on the point of aſking permiſſion to reſign, when I received a private letter from the ſame hand—a letter before which I knelt, in grateful adoration of thoſe noble and ſublime ſentiments which were employed to correct my extreme ſenſibility. The miniſter, with a candour that reflects the higheſt honour on his mind, beſtows great commendation on my ideas of activity, penetration, and influence, as ſpringing from an ardent diſpoſition, equally natural and becoming to youth. At the ſame time, he attempts, not wholly to deſtroy, but ſo to moderate them, that they may have a fair field for exertion, and by that means be able to operate the deſired effects. Thus am I reconciled to myſelf, and encouraged to proceed in the ſame track for another week. Peace of mind, my friend, is a valuable treaſure: and ſo is joy; but joy is too tranſitory to be highly prized.

LETTER XLIII.

FEB. 20.

THE benedictions of the Almighty be with you, my dear friends! and may he beſtow on you that happineſs which he has denied to me!

Albert, I thank you for the friendly deception. I waited to be informed when the nuptials were to be celebrated; and, on that day, had determined to take down Charlotte's picture from the wall, and bury it with ſome other papers. You are now united, and her picture is ſtill there—and there ſhall it remain; why not? I know that my image is with her.—Yes, Albert, without infringing on your rights, it is engraven on her heart. I hold a ſecond place in that ſacred repoſitory of virtue, and no earthly conſideration ſhall induce me to forego it. Could I ſuppoſe ſhe would forget—— Albert, hell is in that thought!—Adieu, Albert!—Charlotte, angel of heaven, adieu! adieu!

LETTER XLIV.

MARCH 15.

I Have ſuſtained a mortification that will inevitably drive me from this place—I loſe all patience!—Death!—it muſt be ſo! And it is you that I may thank for it—You who, by dint of perſuaſion, forced me into a ſtation for which my feelings rendered me wholly unfit. But, that you may not again tell me that every diſappointment I experience is only imputable to the impetuoſity of my temper, I will now, my friend, enter into a regular detail of facts, with all the accuracy and preciſion of a chronicler.

I have already told you, a hundred times, that Count C. has ſhewn me particular marks of favour and eſteem. I called on him yeſterday; and, not recollecting that it was his publick day, when all the nobility of both ſexes reſort to his houſe, and we ſubalterns are of courſe excluded, I ſtayed dinner. After dinner we repaired to the drawing-room, where I remained talking with the count, and Colonel B. who came in, till the company arrived. God knows I was thinking of nothing; when in came the right noble Baroneſs of S. accompanied by her huſband; and her inſignificant little brat of a daughter, with her flat breaſt and tight waiſt. As they paſſed me, they diſplayed thoſe little airs of importance ſo familiar to people who have nothing but their rank to boaſt of. As I cordially deteſt the whole race of them, I had determined to withdraw; and was only waiting till the

the count had diſengaged himſelf from their impertinent prattle, to take leave, when Miſs B. entered the room. As her preſence always affords me pleaſure, I remained to enjoy her converſation, and leaned over the back of her chair; but did not perceive, till ſome time had elapſed, that ſhe did not addreſs me with her uſual frankneſs. This conduct ſurprized me. 'Heavens!' ſaid I to myſelf, 'is it poſſible 'ſhe can be infected with the general 'folly!' I was hurt, and was on the point of leaving the room; but an eager deſire to inveſtigate the matter detained me. The reſt of the company made their appearance. There was Baron F. arrayed in the ſame ſuit that was worn by one of his anceſtors at the coronation of Francis the Firſt. Counſellor R. who is here dignified with the title of My Lord, next appeared, with his deaf-mate. Theſe were followed by that idiot Count J. whoſe dreſs diſplayed a ridiculous mixture of the old Gothick ſtile with the faſhion of the preſent day. When the company were ſeated, I entered into converſation with ſome perſons of my acquaintance, who appeared to treat me with reſerve; I therefore confined my attention entirely to Miſs B. I did not perceive that, during this time, the women were whiſpering together at the other end of the room; that the contagion had reached the men; and that the old baroneſs was talking to the count. All this I afterwards heard from Miſs B. The count, at length, came up to me; and, taking me to the window, ſaid—'You are acquainted 'with our ridiculous cuſtoms: I perceive 'the company are diſſatisfied at your 'being here, and I would not for the 'world that——' 'I beg your Excellency's pardon,' ſaid I, interrupting him: 'I ſhould have thought of this ſooner; but you, I know, will excuſe my 'forgetfulneſs. Indeed, I was going, 'but my evil genius interfered.' And, bowing with a ſmile, I took my leave. The count preſſed my hand in the moſt kind and expreſſive manner. I made a profound reverence to the noble company, threw myſelf into my chaiſe, and drove to M—, that I might behold the ſetting ſun from the ſummit of the mountain, and read that beautiful paſſage in Homer, where the honeſt herdſman is deſcribed receiving Ulyſſes with ſo much hoſpitality. Hitherto all was well.

In the evening I returned to ſupper. There were only a few people, who had taken up a corner of the table-cloth to play at dice. The worthy A—— entered the room juſt after me. As ſoon as he perceived me, he laid down his hat, and came up to me. 'You have met 'with a mortifying circumſtance to-day,' ſaid he. 'Who, I?'—'Yes! the count 'gave you to underſtand that you muſt 'quit the company!'—'The devil take 'the company!' ſaid I; 'I was very 'glad to be gone.'—'You are right,' ſaid he, 'to make the beſt of the mat'ter; I am only ſorry that it ſhould al'ready have become the talk of the 'town.' It was then I felt myſelf hurt. At ſupper, I thought every one that looked at me was thinking of my diſgrace: and the idea only ſerved to increaſe the mortification I had already ſuſtained.

To-day I am inſulted with pity; and, when I hear how my enemies triumph, and ſay, that ſuch is the general fate of thoſe preſumptuous upſtarts, who pride themſelves on their talents, and affect to deſpiſe form, with other ſtupid remarks of the ſame kind—Oh! I could plunge a knife into my heart! Preach as long as you pleaſe on philoſophy and moderation—Shew me the man that could exert them when he has afforded ſubject for raillery to ſuch contemptible raſcals. When their witticiſms are without foundation, they may, indeed, be borne with patience.

LETTER XLV.

MARCH 16.

EVERY thing conſpires to torment me. I met Miſs B. in the avenue to-day. I could not refrain from ſpeaking to her; and, as ſoon as we were at a little diſtance from the company, I expreſſed my ſurprize at her extraordinary conduct at the count's. 'Oh! 'Werter,' ſaid ſhe, with an affectionate tone of voice, 'how could you, who 'knew my heart, ſo miſconſtrue my 'anxiety? How did I feel for you, from 'the firſt moment I entered the room! I 'foreſaw all that happened, and was on 'the point of telling you a hundred times. 'I was certain that the old Baroneſs S—

'and T—— would ſooner quarrel 'with their huſbands than remain in 'your company. I knew the count 'could not affront them, and then all 'this rumour.'—'What rumour, 'Miſs?' ſaid I, endeavouring to conceal my alarm, for all that A—— had told me now occurred to my mind. 'Oh! how much have I already ſuffer-'ed on your account!' ſaid this amiable girl with tears in her eyes. The kind concern ſhe expreſſed affected me ſo ſenſibly, that I could have thrown myſelf at her feet. 'Explain yourſelf,' ſaid I. The tears flowed apace. She dried them with her handkerchief, without attempting to conceal them. 'My 'aunt, you know, was preſent,' ſaid ſhe, 'and in what an odious light does 'ſhe view this affair! Werter, all the laſt 'evening and the whole of this morn-'ing, has ſhe been tormenting me about 'my intimacy with you; and I have 'been obliged to hear you abuſed and 'vilified, without daring to utter 'ſcarcely a ſyllable in your defence.'

Every word was a dagger to my heart: ſhe did not perceive that it would have been an act of humanity to conceal all this from me; but, on the contrary, proceeded to tell me all the numerous comments ſhe had heard upon the matter, and the ſubject for triumph it afforded to the malicious; how they would rejoice to ſee my pride humbled, and the contempt which I beſtowed on others retorted on myſelf.

To hear all this, my friend, from her mouth; and ſpoken, too, in a tone of the tendereſt compaſſion; was diſtraction to my ſoul. I wiſh any body would dare to reproach me with my conduct, that I might have the pleaſure of running him through the body. The ſight of blood would reſtore me to tranquillity. Alas! a hundred times have I taken up a knife, to eaſe the oppreſſion of my heart. I have heard of a noble race of horſes, who, when they are over-heated, will inſtinctively open a vein with their teeth, in order to breathe more freely. I often feel myſelf in the ſame ſtate; and wiſh to open a vein, that I might gain eternal liberty.

LETTER XLVI.

MARCH 24.

I Have written to court for permiſſion to reſign, and ſincerely hope my application will meet with ſucceſs; you muſt pardon me for not having previouſly aſked your advice. Sooner or later I muſt have left this place, and I am aware of every thing you could have urged to induce me to ſtay; therefore make the beſt of it to my mother. I am unable to aſſiſt myſelf; ſhe muſt not murmur, therefore, if I cannot aſſiſt her. She muſt, doubtleſs, be mortified, to ſee her ſon ſtop ſhort in the midſt of that ſplendid career, which would have conducted him to the rank of a privy-counſellor, or ambaſſador, and return to his original obſcurity. Say whatever you pleaſe; collect every poſſible reaſon that ſhould have induced me to ſtay; ſtill I am reſolved to go; and, that you may know whither, I muſt tell you that the Prince of —— is here, who is very much pleaſed with my company; and, hearing of my reſignation, has given me a preſſing invitation to paſs the ſpring with him at his country ſeat. He has promiſed me that I ſhall be entirely my own maſter; and, as we agree tolerably well together, I ſhall venture to accompany him.

LETTER XLVII.

APRIL 19.

I Thank you for your two letters. I did not anſwer them ſooner, becauſe I did not chuſe you ſhould hear from me before I had obtained leave to reſign: for which reaſon I detained my laſt letter, of the twenty-fourth of March, till now; being apprehenſive that my mother would apply to the miniſter, in order to defeat my purpoſe. However, the buſineſs is now done; and I have my diſmiſſion in my pocket. I will not tell you with what reluctance it was granted, nor what the miniſter wrote to me on the ſubject, as it would only afford you freſh cauſe for lamentation. The Hereditary Prince has made me a preſent of five and twenty ducats, accompanied by an expreſſion that affected me almoſt to tears. My mother, therefore, need not ſend me the money I wrote for.

LETTER XLVIII.

APRIL 25.

I Shall leave this to-morrow: and, as my native place is but ſix miles out of the road, I am determined

to

to pay it a viſit, and recall to my mind thoſe youthful days of happineſs which now appear but as a dream. I am even determined to enter it by that very gate which I came through with my mother; when, after my father's death, ſhe left that delightful retreat, to immure herſelf in your melancholy town. Adieu, my friend: you ſhall hear of my pilgrimage.

LETTER XLIX.

MAY 19.

I Have performed my pilgrimage to the place of my nativity, with all the enthuſiaſm of a real pilgrim; and experienced a thouſand ſenſations that I little expected.

Near the large lime-tree, that ſtands about half a league from the town, I alighted from the carriage; and ordered the poſtilion to drive on, that I might enjoy, without interruption, the lively pleaſures of recollection. I ſtopped beneath that lime-tree which, in the days of my infancy, formed the end and object of my walks. How changed! At that period of happy ignorance, I ſighed after a world I did not know, in which I hoped to meet with every enjoyment my heart felt the want of. I was now returned from that world.——Oh, my friend! how had all my hopes been diſappointed, all my projects marred! I beheld that chain of mountains, the ſight of which had ſo often excited the moſt pleaſing ſenſations in my breaſt! Here have I reclined for hours together, wiſhing to loſe myſelf in thoſe thick foreſts and extenſive plains which render the proſpect ſo agreeably variegated; and, when the time of departure arrived, with what reluctance did I quit this favourite ſpot!

As I approached the town, I hailed all the gardens and ſummer-houſes that I recollected. The new ones did not pleaſe me; nor, indeed, do any of the projected alterations for the others. I entered the gate, and once more felt myſelf at home. I ſhall not attempt to give you an accurate deſcription of every thing I ſaw: however intereſting ſuch trivial objects appeared to me, they would neceſſarily prove tedious in the recital.

I had determined to take up my quarters on the market-place, juſt by our old houſe. In going thither, I remarked that the ſchool-room, formerly tenanted by a venerable matron, had now become the habitation of an unlettered mechanick. I recollected the many anxious tears I had ſhed, and the gloomy hours I had paſſed, in that dreary confinement. Every ſtep was marked by ſome particular impreſſion. No pilgrim in the Holy Land ever found ſo many diſtinguiſhed ſpots to attract his attention, or ever experienced ſtronger ſentiments of devotion in viſiting them. To be brief: I followed the courſe of the river till I arrived at a little farm; whither, when boys, we uſed often to go, and amuſe ourſelves with making ducks and drakes on the water. I well remember how I uſed to ſtand by the bank, and contemplate the running ſtream, forming romantick ideas of the different regions through which it was going to paſs, till my imagination was exhauſted, and my mind bewildered in the contemplation of inacceſſible diſtance. Common as this ſentiment may appear, my friend, it is derived from the proud lords of antiquity. Is not the ſtyle of Ulyſſes, when he talks of the immeaſurable ocean, and of the unlimited earth, better adapted to the circumſcribed faculties of man, and more replete with ſound ſenſe, than that of a ſchool-boy, in this age of philoſophy, who thinks himſelf a prodigy of ſcience, becauſe he has learnt to repeat, that the world is round?

I am at preſent with the Prince, at his hunting-ſeat. He poſſeſſes ſo much candour and ſimplicity, that a man may paſs his time with him very agreeably. There is only one point about him that I particularly diſlike—his credulity: that urges him frequently to talk of things, which he has only read or heard of, with the ſame degree of poſitiveneſs as if his knowledge was derived from experience. He likewiſe diſpleaſes me by ſetting a greater value on the brilliancy of my wit, than on the ſolidity of my talents, and that goodneſs of heart which conſtitutes my ſole pride; from whence alone I derive all my courage, happineſs, and miſery. Alas! the ſmall portion of knowledge I poſſeſs may be acquired by any man—but my heart is ſolely mine!

LETTER L.

MAY 25.

I Had a plan in my head, which it was my intention to conceal from you till it was accompliſhed: but, ſince it has failed, I may as well tell it you now. I have long had an inclination to go into the army; and that, you muſt know, was my principal motive for accepting the invitation of the Prince, who has the rank of general in the ſervice of ——.

I communicated my deſign to him in one of our walks. He diſapproved of it; and the reaſons for his diſapprobation were ſo ſtrong, that it would have been madneſs in me to oppoſe them.

LETTER LI.

JUNE 11.

SAY what you will, I can remain in this place no longer. What ſhould I do here? I am quite weary of it. The Prince, indeed, treats me, in all reſpects, as his equal; but ſtill I feel out of my ſphere; and, in fact, our diſpoſitions are diametrically oppoſite. He is a man of underſtanding; but his underſtanding is of that common kind which affords me no better amuſement than the peruſal of a well-written book. I ſhall ſtay with him another week, and then return to my former vagabond life.

The beſt things I have done during my reſidence here, are ſome deſigns. The Prince has ſome taſte himſelf; and would appear to have ſtill more, were it not greatly obſcured by a ſcientifick jargon that renders him frequently unintelligible. I am often deprived of all patience, when, in obedience to the impulſe of a fervent imagination, I am attempting to deſcribe to him the miraculous beauties both of nature and art; and he thinks he performs wonders, if he can interrupt me with ſome quaint criticiſm, or pollute the converſation with a profuſion of technical terms.

LETTER LII.

JUNE 18.

WHITHER am I going? I will tell you in confidence. I muſt paſs another fortnight in this place. After that, I did intend to viſit the mines of ——: but, to be frank with you, that is a mere deluſion; I only wiſh to be nearer to Charlotte. I ſmile at the weakneſs of my heart, and yield to it's dictates.

LETTER LIII.

JULY 29.

NO! it is well—all is well. Her huſband! Oh! thou great God, who gave me being, if thou hadſt deſtined ſuch happineſs for me, my whole life would have formed but one continued ſcene of adoration! But I will not murmur at thy decrees: forgive theſe tears! forgive theſe vain deſires!—She my wife! To have claſped in my arms the moſt amiable creature under heaven!——My whole frame is convulſed when I ſee Albert throw his arms round that delicate waiſt!

And yet, my friend, I muſt ſay, that ſhe would have been happier with me than with Albert. He is incapable of affording her a thouſand gratifications which the exquiſite ſenſibility of her ſoul demands. There is a cool ſtoiciſm about him—in ſhort, whatever may be the reaſon, his heart beats not in uniſon with hers. Oh, my friend! how often, in the peruſal of an affecting ſtory, have I diſcovered that ſecret ſympathy which reigns in Charlotte's boſom and my own, and ſhews that we were made for each other! Yet Albert loves her with all his ſoul; and does not ſuch love merit a return?

I have been interrupted by an importunate viſitant. My tears are now dried up, and my ſorrows are diſſipated. Adieu.

LETTER LIV.

AUG. 4.

I Am not the only child of Misfortune. All mankind are diſappointed in their hopes, and deceived in their expectations. I have been to ſee the good woman who lives on the green near the lime-trees. Her eldeſt boy ran to meet me; and an exclamation of joy which he uttered at ſeeing me brought out his mother, who appeared very much dejected. The firſt thing ſhe ſaid was—'Alas! 'my

'my good Sir, our poor little John is 'dead!' He was the youngeſt of her boys. I was ſilent. 'My huſband,' ſaid ſhe, 'is returned pennyleſs from 'Switzerland; and, but for the kind 'aſſiſtance of ſome charitable perſons, 'he muſt have begged his way home; 'for he was ſeized with an ague on the 'road.' I was unable to ſay a ſyllable to her. I gave the child ſomething. She begged me to take a few apples, which I accepted, and quitted the place with a ſorrowful heart.

LETTER LV.

AUG. 21.

THE tranſitions of my mind are as rapid as they are violent. A ſudden gleam of joy will ſometimes interpoſe it's friendly light to chear my drooping ſoul; but, alas! it is momentary. When I indulge in theſe deluſive dreams, I cannot help enjoying the idea that, were Albert to die, I then might—Yes, my dear Charlotte, then—— And I purſue the phantom till it leads me to the brink of a precipice, from which I ſtart back with horror!

When I go out at the ſame gate, through which I firſt conducted Charlotte to the carriage as we were going to the ball, what different ſenſations do I experience! The happineſs I then knew is now fled—for ever fled! Not a ſingle object that wears the ſame appearance—not a ſingle pulſation of my heart that creates the ſame emotions as I then felt! Could the ſpirit of ſome potent prince return from the manſions of death, and behold thoſe palaces, which he had formerly built and embelliſhed in a ſtyle of ſuperior magnificence, reduced to ruins by the deſtructive incurſions of an enemy, the ſenſations he would experience would be exactly ſimilar to thoſe I now feel.

LETTER LVI.

SEPT. 3.

I Sometimes am at a loſs to comprehend how another can love her—how another can dare to love her! while I love her myſelf with ſuch unexampled tenderneſs, with ſuch unequalled force!—when ſhe is the ſole object of my thoughts, the only friend I poſſeſs!

LETTER LVII.

SEPT. 6.

IT was with great difficulty I could prevail on myſelf to throw aſide the blue frock which I wore the firſt time I danced with Charlotte, though it had become perfectly ſhabby. However, I have had another made exactly like it, turned up with yellow; and yellow waiſtcoat and breeches. I do not eſteem it ſo much as the firſt: but I rather think that, in time, it will become equally dear to me.

LETTER LVIII.

SEPT. 15.

I Frequently wiſh myſelf out of the world, when I reflect on the number of contemptible animals, whom the Almighty permits to remain in it, ſo wholly devoid of ſenſibility, that they deſpiſe the very few objects that are worthy their attention.

You remember the walnut-trees, under which I ſat with Charlotte at the Vicar of S——'s; that I contemplated with ſuch ſublime pleaſure; and that were an ornament to the parſonage-yard, over which their wide-ſpreading branches formed a reſpectable ſhade. Venerable monuments!—that brought to one's mind the worthy paſtors who firſt planted them. The ſchoolmaſter has often told us the name of one of them, which he heard from his grandfather. He muſt have been a man of reſpectability; and his memory was ever ſacred to me when I was ſeated under thoſe trees.—Yes, the ſame ſchoolmaſter had tears in his eyes yeſterday when we were talking together on the circumſtance of their being cut down.—Cut down!—I am diſtracted!—Had I been there at the time, I verily believe I ſhould have ſacrificed the villain who had dared to apply the firſt ſtroke. Muſt I bear witneſs to this deſolation—I who would have put on mourning, if I had had two ſuch trees in my yard, and one of them had died of old age!—But that is not all. Humanity was concerned in the act—for the whole village is affected by it—and I ſincerely hope that the vicar's wife will, by the loſs of her butter and eggs, be rendered ſenſible of the groſſneſs of her offence; for it was ſhe

that

that did it, the wife of the new vicar—our good old man went before his trees!—a tall ſkeleton, who is always ill, and who has great reaſon not to care for any thing in the world, ſince nobody in the world cares for her: an ideot, who lays pretenſions to literary knowledge; affects to inveſtigate the Canons; is about to publiſh a New Moral and Critical Reformation of the Chriſtian Religion; and ſagaciouſly ſhrugs up her ſhoulders at the reveries of Lavater. None but ſuch a being as her could have cauſed my walnut-trees to be cut down—I cannot get it out of my head—and the reaſons ſhe gives for it are ſo curious! The leaves that fell from them, forſooth, rendered her yard damp and dirty; the branches intercepted the light; and, when the walnuts were ripe, the children threw ſtones at them to knock them down, which affected her delicate nerves, and interrupted her meditations, while ſhe was employed in weighing the ſeparate merits of Kennikot, Semler, and Michaëlis.

When I found all the inhabitants of the village, and particularly the old people, ſo diſcontented, I aſked them why they ſuffered it. 'Oh, Sir!' ſaid they, 'what could we do againſt the 'mayor's orders?'

One circumſtance, however, gives me pleaſure. The mayor, and the vicar—who was anxious to derive ſome advantage from his wife's caprice—agreed to divide the trees between them; when the revenue-officer, being informed of it, laid claim to them both, and ſold them to the beſt bidder. They are ſtill lying on the ground. Oh! were I a prince, what a puniſhment would I inflict on the infamous triumvirate—the vicar's wife, the mayor, and the revenue-officer!—But, if I were a prince, what ſhould I care for the trees that grew in my dominions?

LETTER LIX.

OCT. 10.

IF I do but ſee her fine black eyes, I am content. Alas! I am concerned to find that Albert is not ſo happy—as he expected to be—as I thought he would be. If—— I hate broken ſentences: but at preſent it is impoſſible for me to expreſs myſelf otherwiſe; and yet, methinks, I am ſufficiently explicit.

LETTER LX.

OCT. 12.

OSSIAN has taken the place of Homer in my heart. Through what a world does that ſublime author conduct me! To wander over dreary plains, re-echoing on every ſide with the dreadful noiſe of the impetuous winds! while we deſcry, amid the flitting clouds, the ſpirits of our anceſtors, by the pale glimmering of the moon; to hear from the mountain's top their feeble groans iſſuing from their caverns, mingled with the roaring of the torrent, and the lamentations of the love-lorn maiden, weeping over the moſs-covered tomb of her departed warrior; I meet the venerable bard, with ſilver locks, wandering over the wide-expanded vale, to diſcover ſome veſtige of his anceſtors. Alas! he only finds their tombs!—Then, caſting a dejected look towards the bright orb of night, as ſhe gradually ſinks beneath the ſwelling waves, the hero's mind is ſtruck with the recollection of thoſe times when her propitious ray ſhone on the dangers of the brave, and her faint light beamed on his gliding bark, decorated with the palm of Victory. When I read the deep marks of ſorrow imprinted on his brow; when I ſee this hero, the laſt of his race, bending towards the grave; when I ſee him caſt an earneſt look on the cold earth, deſtined ſoon to cover him; and when I hear him exclaim—'The traveller, 'who has known me in my youth, 'will come; he will come, and aſk—"Where is the Bard, the illuſtrious "ſon of Fingal?" He will walk over 'my tomb, and ſeek me in vain upon 'the earth!'—Then, my friend, I could ſeize the ſword of ſome noble warrior, and reſcue my prince from the tedious languor of life, and afterwards plunge it in my own breaſt, that I might follow the demi-god whom my hand had ſet at liberty.

LETTER LXI.

OCT. 19.

ALAS! this void, this fearful void, which I feel in my boſom!—I often think that, if I could preſs her to my heart only once, it would be compleatly filled.

LET-

LETTER LXII.

OCT. 26.

I Am every day more confirmed in my opinion, that the exiſtence of an individual is of very little conſequence to ſociety.

A friend of Charlotte's came juſt now to pay her a viſit. I went into an adjoining room, and took up a book; but, finding myſelf indiſpoſed to read, I laid it down again, and aſſumed my pen. I overheard their converſation: they were telling each other the little news of the town; how one was going to be married, and another was very ill. 'Yes,' ſays one, 'ſhe has a dry cough, and 'frequent fainting-fits. It is impoſſible 'ſhe ſhould recover.'—'Mr. N. is not 'in a much better ſtate,' ſaid Charlotte. 'He begins to ſwell already,' replied the other.

During this converſation, my imagination conducted me to the beds of theſe dying friends, whom I ſaw ſtruggling with death, as loth to leave this ſcene of complicated miſery; while the good women were talking of their departure with the ſame indifference as if they had been perfect ſtrangers to them.

When I look round the room in which I am now ſitting, and ſee Charlotte's clothes ſcattered about—her earrings on the table; there Albert's papers; and every piece of furniture as familiar to me as the very ink-ſtand I am now uſing—I ſay to myſelf, 'Think 'on what thou art to this family—every 'thing! Honoured by thy friends, thou 'art capable of contributing to their 'pleaſure; and, without them, thou 'couldſt not exiſt thyſelf! Yet, wert 'thou to quit this circle, how long 'would they feel that void which thy 'abſence would occaſion?'

Alas! ſuch is the frailty of man, that even there, where he is moſt conſcious of his exiſtence, where he leaves the moſt powerful impreſſions on the memory—on the hearts—of his friends, he muſt inevitably periſh and diſappear; and that—quickly!

LETTER LXIII.

OCT. 27.

I Could tear open my boſom—I could blow out my brains—when I reflect on the unſociable qualities of man!—Alas! I could never receive from another the love, the joy, the warmth, the pleaſure, which are not implanted in my own boſom: nor, with a heart glowing with the moſt perfect felicity, could I impart to another that happineſs which he is, by nature, rendered unfit to participate!

LETTER LXIV.

OCT. 30.

A Thouſand times have I been on the point of throwing my arms about her lovely neck. Heaven knows what torment it is to ſee ſuch charms continually paſſing and repaſſing before one without daring to touch them! And yet nature impels us to take what we wiſh for.—Do not children ſeize whatever ſtrikes their fancy? And I——

LETTER LXV.

NOV. 3.

HEAVEN knows how often I lay down in my bed with an earneſt deſire never more to riſe; and in the morning I open my eyes, again behold the ſun, and am wretched!—Oh, why am I not wholly deprived of my ſenſes! Why cannot I impute my ſorrow to a gloomy atmoſphere, or to the diſappointment of ſome well-founded hope? Then would the heavy burden of my grief be leſs inſupportable. Wretch that I am! I feel but too ſenſibly that I only am in fault.—In fault? No! it is enough that I conceal within my boſom the diſmal ſource of my woe, as I formerly concealed the pure ſource of my bliſs. Am I then no longer the ſame man, who erſt experienced the fulleſt ſenſations of pleaſure; who, at every ſtep, ſaw a paradiſe before him; whoſe liberal heart glowed with univerſal benevolence?—Alas, no!—that heart is now become torpid, dead to every enjoyment! My eyes, too, are dry; and my ſenſes, no longer refreſhed by the grateful tears of ſenſibility, mark my brow with the deep wrinkles of grief. My ſufferings are great: for I have loſt the ſole charm of my life; that active, vivifying power, which enabled me to create imaginary worlds.—Alas! it is gone for ever!

When from my window I contemplate the diſtant hills; when I behold the

the ſun diſpel the morning miſt, and gild the ſurrounding country with his rays; while the meandring ſtream glides gently towards me, winding through the naked willows: when I find that theſe complicated charms of nature are incapable of raiſing one pleaſing emotion in my breaſt, I bend before my Creator with all humility, as a being deprived of every vivifying principle! How often have I proſtrated myſelf on the earth, to implore Heaven for tears, with the ſame earneſtneſs as the huſbandman prays for rain to moiſten the earth, parched by the ſcorching rays of the ſun!

But I find that the Almighty does not grant rain nor ſunſhine to our importunate prayers; and thoſe times, the recollection of which ſo torments me, were only happy becauſe I patiently waited for the diſpenſations of the Eternal, and received his bleſſings with a grateful heart.

LETTER LXVI.

NOV. 8.

CHARLOTTE has reproved me, with ſuch heavenly mildneſs, for giving way to exceſs—for attempting to drown my cares in wine, by drinking a bottle where I uſed to drink but a glaſs! 'Don't do ſo,' ſaid ſhe; 'think of 'Charlotte!'—'Think of you! Need 'you order me to think of you? I do 'think—and yet it is not thinking!—'Your image is perpetually before 'me. This very morning I was 'ſitting in the place where you laſt 'alighted from the carriage——' She immediately turned the converſation, to prevent me from entering too deeply into the ſubject.

My dear friend, I am no longer maſter of myſelf. She makes me—juſt what ſhe pleaſes!

LETTER LXVII.

NOV. 15.

I Sincerely thank you, my friend, for the kind concern you expreſs for my welfare, and for the good advice you offer me. But make yourſelf eaſy. Leave me to my ſufferings: though deeply oppreſſed, I have fortitude enough to ſupport them.

I reſpect religion: it is a ſtaff that ſuſtains the man who is ſinking with fatigue; a cup of refreſhment to the wretch that is dying with thirſt. Only, can it—ought it—to be the ſame for all? Conſider this vaſt univerſe: you will find thouſands who have never known it; and thouſands who never will receive it, whether it has been preached to them or not!—May not I then be as one of theſe?—Doth not the Son of God himſelf declare, that thoſe whom his Father had given him ſhould be about him? Suppoſe then I ſhould not have been given to him; ſuppoſe the Father ſhould have reſerved me for himſelf, as my heart tells me he has—— Let me entreat you not to put a falſe conſtruction on what I advance; nor to turn theſe innocent expreſſions into ridicule. I open my whole heart to you, exempt from diſguiſe. Did I not repoſe an entire confidence in you, I would not have entered upon a ſubject of which we muſt all be equally ignorant.—What is the deſtiny of man? To fill up the meaſure of his ſorrows, and empty the cup that is preſented to him. But if, when the Son of Heaven approached the cup to his mortal lips, it appeared bitter even to him, why ſhould I affect greater courage, and pretend to find it ſweet? And why ſhould I be aſhamed at that fearful moment, when the ſoul ſhudders between exiſtence and annihilation; when the paſt ſhall appear as a tranſient meteor in the dark abyſs of futurity; when every ſurrounding object ſhall be involved in the general deſtruction, and the whole world ſhall periſh with me? Is not this the voice of a creature groaning under accumulated miſeries, and making fruitleſs efforts to expreſs his deſpair—'My 'God! my God! why haſt thou for-'ſaken me?' Should I bluſh to adopt this expreſſion? Should I dread the approach of that moment, which muſt inevitably arrive, when even he whoſe hand can ſet the heavens in motion could not avoid it?

LETTER LXVIII.

NOV. 21.

SHE does not perceive—alas! ſhe does not feel—that ſhe is preparing a poiſon which will inevitably prove fatal to us both! And as for me—I drink, with inconceivable pleaſure, the deadly

potion.

potion, preſented me by the hand I adore!—What mean thoſe tender looks which ſhe ſometimes beſtows on me; that complacency with which ſhe liſtens to the involuntary effuſions of my ſoul; that kind compaſſion for my ſufferings expreſſed in every feature of her face?

Yeſterday, when I was leaving the houſe, ſhe gave me her hand, and ſaid—'Adieu, dear Werter!' *Dear* Werter! It was the firſt time ſhe had beſtowed on me that affectionate epithet; and the impreſſion it made ſunk deep into my heart. I repeated it to myſelf a hundred times; and at night, when I was going to bed, I ſuddenly exclaimed—'Good night, dear Werter!' when, rouzed from my reverie, I could not but laugh at myſelf.

LETTER LXIX.

NOV. 24.

SHE is ſenſible of my ſufferings. Her look to-day pierced my very ſoul!—I called on her, and found her alone. I ſaid not a word; and ſhe fixed her eyes ſtedfaſtly on me. She ſeemed to be totally changed: the ſtriking beauties of her face, the fire of genius that ſparkled in her eyes, appeared to be fled. But there was a heavenly ſoftneſs in her countenance, ſuperior to the moſt ſplendid charms, expreſſive of the tendereſt concern, of the kindeſt compaſſion! Why did I ſuffer the cold ſentiments of reſpect to deter me from throwing myſelf at her feet? from preſſing her to my heart, and declaring my gratitude by a thouſand kiſſes?

Seeing my confuſion, ſhe had recourſe to her harpſichord, which ſhe accompanied in a low voice of ſeraphick ſweetneſs. Never did her lips appear ſo lovely! they ſeemed but juſt to open, as if to receive the melodious ſounds of the inſtrument, which they repeated with the ſoftened harmony of a diſtant echo.—Could I but deſcribe to you the ſenſations I then experienced! their force was too powerful to ſupport! I bowed down my head, and pronounced this vow—'Beauteous lips! the bleſt abode 'of heavenly ſpirits! never will I vio-'late your purity!' And yet I wiſh——Alas! an eternal bar is placed between us! Could I but taſte that bliſs ſupreme, then would I die to expiate my ſins!—My ſins?

LETTER LXX.

NOV. 30.

NO! never—never ſhall I recover myſelf! Every ſtep I take preſents to my diſtracted ſight ſome dreadful apparition that ſhakes the ſeat of reaſon! To-day—Oh, Fate!—Oh, Humanity!

Having no appetite, I went, about the hour of dinner, to the river's ſide. The country ſeemed quite deſerted: a cold, damp, eaſterly wind, blew from the mountain; and the thick grey clouds, pregnant with rain, overſpread the valley. At ſome diſtance I ſaw a man, in a ſhabby green jacket, walking among the rocks, and bending towards the ground, as if he was looking for ſimples. I walked towards him; and, the ſound of my footſteps having induced him to turn about, I ſaw a countenance remarkably intereſting; and, though clouded by a ſettled melancholy, it was expreſſive of a frank and honeſt mind. His hair was curled at the ſides, and hung down behind in a long thick plait that reached below his waiſt. As his appearance ſhewed him to be a man of the lower claſs, I thought he would not be diſpleaſed with me for taking notice of him; and therefore aſked him what he was looking for. 'I am looking 'for flowers,' ſaid he, with a deep ſigh; 'but I can't find any.'—'Why this is 'not the proper ſeaſon for them,' ſaid I, ſmiling. 'There are ſo many flowers!' replied he, approaching me with a haſty ſtep. 'I have both roſes and lilies, of 'different ſorts, in my garden,' ſaid he. 'My mother gave me one ſort; it 'grew like tares: I have been looking 'for it theſe two days, without being 'able to find it. And even here, too, 'in the fields, there are always flowers, 'both yellow, blue, and red: aye, and 'the centaury, that bears a pretty little 'flower—Not one of them can I find!' I aſked him what he meant to do with theſe flowers. At this queſtion his features were inſtantly contracted into a convulſive grin. 'If you will not be-'tray me,' ſaid he, placing his finger myſteriouſly upon his lip, 'I will tell 'you that I have promiſed my fair a 'noſegay.'—'That's very proper,' ſaid I. 'Ah! ſhe has many finer things 'than that—ſhe is rich!'—'And yet, 'I ſuppoſe, ſhe ſets a great value on 'your noſegay?'—'Oh! ſhe has jewels!

'aye, and a crown too!'—'Indeed! What is her name, then?'—'If the States-General would pay me what they owe me, I should be quite another man!—Yes, there was a time when I was happy as the day is long. But now it is all over with me! I am——' The tearful eye, which he raised towards Heaven, too well expressed his meaning. 'You were, then, once happy?' said I. 'Ah! would I were still the same! I was as gay and as merry as a fish in the water!'

An old woman, who was coming along the road, now called out—'Henry! Henry! where have you got to? Do come to dinner.'—'Is that your son?' said I to her. 'Yes, that is my poor son!' said she. 'The Lord has given me a heavy burden to support!'—'How long has he been in this state?'—'Only six months that he has been so quiet as he is now. Thank God it is no worse! Before that, he was quite raving for a whole year; and then we were obliged to have him chained down in a mad-house. At present, he does no harm to any body: but he talks of nothing but kings and emperors. He was formerly a very quiet, good young man, and helped to maintain me; for he wrote a very fine hand. All of a sudden he became melancholy, fell into a violent fever, and then lost his senses. If I was to tell you, Sir——' I interrupted the rapid course of her narration, to ask her what time it was that he regretted so much, and in which he boasted of having enjoyed such perfect happiness. 'Poor fool!' said she, with a smile of pity; 'he means the time when he was quite out of his mind, which he always speaks of with rapture; the time which he passed at the mad-house.' A thunderbolt would have had less effect on me! I put some money into her hand, and retired with precipitation.

'Oh, thou wast happy then!' I exclaimed, as I walked hastily back towards the town: 'thou wast as merry as a fish in the water! Gracious God! is it then the wretched fate of man, that he should only know happiness before he has attained to the possession of reason, and after he is deprived of it? Unhappy being! And yet I envy thy lot; I envy thy madness, that disorder of the senses that daily consumes thy strength. Thou goest forth, full of hope, to gather flowers for thy queen in the depth of winter; art afflicted at thy disappointment, and canst not conceive the reason of it! And, as for me, I go forth without hope, without any object in view, and return as I went. Thou amusest thyself with the pleasing ideas of that imaginary greatness thou wouldst enjoy, if the States General would pay thee. Happy being! that canst attribute the privation of happiness to any terrestrial object! Thou art not aware that thy anxiety resides in thine own breast; that thy disordered brain is the seat of thy misery; and that all the kings of the earth are unable to relieve thee!'

Perish the miserable being that can laugh at a sick man, who travels in search of distant springs, that can only tend to augment his disease, and render his death painful!—Who can look down with contempt on the pilgrim who, to alleviate the sufferings of a heart deeply wounded by the sharp sting of remorse, undertakes a journey of devotion to the Holy Land! Every step he takes on the uneven road affords him consolation; and, as he draws near to the goal of his desires, he finds himself gradually relieved from the weight that oppressed him. And dare ye brand his devotion with the pompous name of madness, ye vain declaimers, who are reposing on your beds of down? Madness! O God! thou seest my tears! Thou hast afflicted us with a sufficient portion of misery: why, then, give us brethren who only strive to increase our affliction, by seeking to deprive us of that confidence which we repose in thee—in thee, who lookest down with equal mercy on all thy creatures! The strengthening vine, the salutary herbs, are thy gifts; who hast instilled into every plant that health and comfort of which we hourly stand in need. O Father! whom I know not! thou who wert wont to cheer my drooping heart, but who now turnest thy looks from thy servant; my soul is no longer able to support thy silence! Could a father be angry with his son for rushing unexpectedly into his presence, and thus addressing him—'O my father! forgive me for having shortened my destined journey,

'journey, and returning before the appointed time. The world is every where the ſame. Pain and labour, pleaſure and reward, are every where to be found: but I view them all with equal indifference; I can find no happineſs but in thy preſence; and there ſuffer me to abide.' And wouldſt thou, heavenly Father, reject ſuch a ſon?

LETTER LXXI.

DEC. 1.

MY friend! The happy maniac I mentioned to you in my laſt, was clerk to Charlotte's father. An unfortunate paſſion he conceived for her, which he long ſecretly cheriſhed, and at laſt diſcovered, firſt deprived him of his place, and then of his ſenſes! Think, if you can, from theſe few inſipid words, what a ſtorm this account excited in my boſom, when it was told me by Albert with as much indifference as you will probably read it with!

LETTER LXXII.

DEC. 4.

I Can ſupport this ſtate no longer. To-day I was ſitting by Charlotte. She was playing different tunes on her harpſichord, with an expreſſion which it is impoſſible to deſcribe. Her little ſiſter was dreſſing her doll upon my knee. The tears came into my eyes. I ſtooped down, and perceived her wedding-ring. My tears flowed down my cheeks. She immediately began to play that divine air which has ſo often ſoothed my diſtracted ſoul. At firſt, it afforded me conſolation; but it ſoon recalled to my mind the times that are paſt, the tranſitory moments of bliſs I have experienced, and the long intervals of unavailing ſorrow: and then I walked haſtily up and down the room. But, every note increaſing my grief—'For 'Heaven's ſake, Charlotte!' I emphatically exclaimed, 'for Heaven's ſake, 'deſiſt!' She immediately ſtopped; and, looking at me with a moſt expreſſive ſmile, ſaid—'Werter, you muſt 'be ill, indeed, ſince you are diſguſted 'with your favourite food! Pray go, 'and try to compoſe yourſelf.' I tore myſelf from her; and—— Great God! thou ſeeſt my miſery, and will put an end to it!

LETTER LXXIII.

DEC. 6.

HOW often her image purſues me! Walking or ſleeping, ſhe is perpetually before me! Soon as I retire to reſt, and cloſe my weary eye-lids, I find her black eyes imprinted on my brain. I cannot expreſs what I feel!—But thoſe fire-darting orbs are ever preſent to my ſight, and abſorb all my faculties!

What is man, that boaſted demi-god? Does not his very ſtrength forſake him when he ſtands in the greateſt need of it? And whether he ſoar on the wings of pleaſure, or ſeek to ſink into the abyſs of grief, is he not equally obliged to ſtop in the midſt of his career? And when he wiſhes to plunge into the ocean of infinity, is he not forcibly impelled to return to thoſe cold ſentiments that urge him to ſupport a miſerable exiſtence?

LETTER LXXIV.

DEC. 8.

MY dear friend, I feel, as thoſe unfortunate beings muſt have felt who were formerly ſuppoſed to be poſſeſſed by devils! I am often in this ſituation. It is not agony; it is not paſſion: it is a ſecret rage, that excites an inward agitation, and threatens me with inſtant ſuffocation. Wretch that I am! I wander amid the dark and dreary ſcenes which this unfriendly ſeaſon exhibits!

I went out laſt night. I had heard, in the evening, that the river, and all the neighbouring brooks, had overflown their banks; and that, from Walheim to this place, my favourite valley was entirely covered with water. It was paſt eleven when I ſallied forth to view the dreadful ſcene! By the faint glimmering of the moon, I ſaw the impetuous waves ruſhing over the ſummit of the rock, and rolling, with a horrid noiſe over the fields and meadows, breaking down the trees and hedges in their rapid courſe. The whole valley was one continued ſea, agitated by furi-

rious winds: and, when the pale orb of Night peeped from behind a ſable cloud, it's light, reflected in the torrent, added freſh horror to the ſcene. It was then my tortured ſoul longed to take it's flight to heaven. I ſtood on the brink of the precipice with extended arms, caſting an eager look upon the flood beneath; anxious, by plunging headlong down, to end my torments. Alas! my feet were rooted to the earth; I had not power to terminate my ſorrows. My glaſs is not yet run. O, my friend! how chearfully would I have reſigned the boaſted dignity of man, to be incorporated with the impetuous blaſt, to rend the clouds, and diſturb the ſurface of the deep!—And ſhall we never quit our earthly priſon, to enjoy this ſublime pleaſure!

How mournfully did I caſt my eyes towards a favourite ſpot, where I had often ſat with Charlotte, beneath a willow's friendly ſhade, after a ſummer's walk! That, too, was overflown; and the extreme branches of my favourite tree were ſcarcely viſible above the water. The ſteward's houſe, and all the ſurrounding fields, which I had ſo often traverſed, then occurred to my mind. I trembled leſt they ſhould have been deſtroyed by the violence of the ſtorm. Paſt happy ſcenes beamed a tranſitory gleam of comfort on my heart; like the wretched captive who dreams of fields, and flocks, and fragrant flowers. I was—— But I do not blame myſelf, for I have courage to die. I ſhould have—— At preſent, I am like a decrepid old woman who picks ſticks from the hedges, and begs her bread from door to door, to prolong, for a few ſad moments, her feeble and wretched exiſtence!

LETTER LXXV.

DEC. 17.

WHAT does this mean, my dear friend? I am frightened at myſelf! Is not my love for her pure and holy as the chaſte ardour of the cloiſtered nun? Has my heart ever formed a wiſh that it need bluſh to own? To atteſt this truth by oaths were needleſs. But now—ſuch dreams! They are ſurely right who aſcribe thoſe nightly wanderings of the mind to ſome external power.

Laſt night—I tremble as I tell you—I held her in my arms, preſſed her to my boſom, and imprinted a thouſand burning kiſſes on her trembling lips; while our eyes beamed with the moſt lively expreſſions of pleaſure. Gracious Heaven! can the happineſs I now experience in recalling theſe tranſports to my mind, be deemed a crime?—Oh, Charlotte! Charlotte! my fate is now decided!—my ſenſes are diſordered!—my eyes are filled with tears!—my peace of mind is gone for ever!—I have nothing now to wiſh for—nothing to hope! 'Twere better to depart!

The

The Editor to the Reader.

IN order to give a connected account of the laſt remarkable days of Werter, I find myſelf obliged to interrupt the courſe of his letters by a narrative; the particulars of which were ſupplied me by Charlotte, Albert, his own ſervant, and ſome other witneſſes.

Werter's unfortunate paſſion for Charlotte had inſenſibly diminiſhed the harmony which ſubſiſted between that amiable creature and her worthy huſband; whoſe attachment to her, though ſincere, was not ſufficiently ardent to divert his attention from buſineſs, which by degrees had been ſuffered to occupy the firſt place in his thoughts. He was unwilling, indeed, to own that there really did exiſt this material difference between the days he now paſſed, and thoſe which preceded his marriage. He could not, however, but experience a certain degree of diſpleaſure at Werter's marked attention to Charlotte—an attention which muſt certainly have appeared to him as an infringement on his rights, and which, at the ſame time, conveyed a kind of tacit reproof on his conduct. This idea increaſed the ill-humour excited by the hurry of a buſineſs which was productive of much trouble and little emolument. The afflictions that preyed on the heart of Werter, having damped the fire of his genius, and deſtroyed the quickneſs of his perceptions, rendered his company ſpiritleſs and inſipid. The ſympathizing breaſt of Charlotte could not fail to catch the infection; and a tender melancholy overſpread her lovely countenance, which Albert aſcribed to a growing paſſion for her lover, and Werter imputed to the change that was ſo apparent in the conduct of her huſband. Hence aroſe a mutual want of confidence between the two friends, that rendered their ſociety irkſome to each other. Albert avoided going to his wife's apartment when he knew Werter was there; and Werter, who obſerved this, after many fruitleſs efforts to diſcontinue his viſits entirely, embraced the opportunity of calling when her huſband was engaged in buſineſs. This afforded new ſubject for diſcontent; and, at length, induced Albert to tell his wife, that decency required the preſervation of appearances, and ſhould urge her to requeſt Werter to render his viſits leſs frequent.

About the ſame time, this unhappy young man adopted a firm reſolution to quit the world: it was an idea he had long cheriſhed, and more particularly ſince the renewal of his intimacy with Charlotte; but he wiſhed a ſtep of ſuch importance not to be undertaken raſhly and precipitately, but to be the reſult of conviction produced by deliberate reaſon. His doubts and ſtruggles are viſible in the following fragment, which was probably the beginning of a letter to his friend.

'Her preſence, her fate, the intereſt 'ſhe takes in mine, have ſtill power to 'extract the laſt tears from my exhauſted brain.'

'Draw up the curtain, and paſs be'hind it—that is all! Whence then this 'heſitation? whence this fear?—Is it 'becauſe we know not what is behind? 'Becauſe, once gone, there is no re'turn?—and that the human mind is 'ever apt to form objects of terror in a 'ſtate of uncertainty?'

The mortification he had ſuſtained, when he was ſecretary to the ambaſſador, was never effaced from his mind: he ſeldom, indeed, mentioned it; but, when he did, however indirectly, it was eaſy to perceive that he looked on it as an indelible ſtain upon his honour; and that it had inſpired him with an unconquerable averſion to buſineſs, and to every political employment. Henceforth, he encouraged that ſingular mode of thinking, that appears in his letters; and gave way to a paſſion which knew no bounds, and which was deſtined to conſume all his remaining vigour. The

perpetua

perpetual uniformity and mournfulneſs of his intercourſe with the moſt lovely and moſt beloved of her ſex, whoſe peace of mind he diſturbed—the tumultuous agitation of his ſenſes—the melancholy reflections occaſioned by a life paſſed without end or deſign; impelled him, at length, to the deſperate commiſſion of an act that nothing but inſanity can ever palliate.

LETTER LXXVI.

DEC. 20.

THANKS, my dear William, to thy friendſhip, for having diſcovered a word ſo well adapted to my ideas. Yes, you are certainly right—it would be better for me to *depart*. Your propoſal, however, to return to you, does not entirely meet my approbation; at leaſt, I ſhould wiſh to take one other excurſion firſt, particularly as the froſt continues, and the roads are conſequently good. Your intention of coming to fetch me, affords me great pleaſure; only let me entreat you to poſtpone your journey for a fortnight, and not to ſet out till you ſhall have received another letter from me. No fruit ſhould be gathered before it is perfectly ripe; and a fortnight, you know, may make a great difference in it's maturity. Deſire my mother to pray for her ſon; and tell her I ſincerely aſk her pardon for all the anxiety I have occaſioned her. It was ever my fate to create unhappineſs, where I ſhould have beſtowed joy. Adieu, my dear friend! May all the bleſſings of Heaven attend you! Adieu!

The day on which he wrote this letter, which was the Sunday before Chriſtmas, he went in the duſk of the evening to call on Charlotte, and found her alone. She was buſy in arranging ſome play-things, as a Chriſtmas preſent for her brothers and ſiſters. He talked to her of the pleaſure the children would experience; and of that happy age when the unexpected opening of a door, and the ſudden appearance of a tree, decorated with lights, fruit, and ſweetmeats*, excites the moſt violent tranſports of joy.—'You ſhall have a preſent, too, 'if you behave well,' ſaid Charlotte, endeavouring to conceal her embarraſſment under a pleaſing ſmile. 'What 'do you mean by behaving well? Tell 'me, lovely Charlotte, how you would 'have me behave?'—'Thurſday,' ſaid ſhe, 'will be Chriſtmas Eve; the 'children are all to be here, and my 'father too; you muſt come alſo, but 'not before.' Werter ſtarted. 'It 'muſt be ſo,' ſaid ſhe: 'let me entreat 'you to comply with my requeſt, as you 'value my peace of mind. Indeed, 'Werter, we muſt not go on as we have 'done hitherto.' He turned from her, and walked haſtily about the room, muttering to himſelf—'We muſt not go on 'as we have done hitherto!' Charlotte perceiving the violent agitation into which theſe words had thrown him, endeavoured, by a thouſand different queſtions, to divert his thoughts from the ſubject. 'No, Charlotte,' ſaid he, 'I will never ſee you more!'—'Why ſo, 'Werter?—You muſt, you ſhall ſee 'us again; only be calm. Oh! why 'were you born with that impetuous 'paſſion, that fixes you ſo invincibly to 'every object that has once caught your 'attention! Let me entreat you, Wer'ter,' taking his hand, 'to reſtrain your 'impetuoſity within the bounds of diſ'cretion. What an infinite ſource of 'amuſement do your ſenſe, your knowledge, and your talents, open to your 'mind! Exert the ſpirit of a man, 'and ſhake off this fatal attachment for 'an object that can only pity you.' He bit his lips, and looked at her with an eye of deſpair. She ſtill kept hold of his hand.—'Be cool for one moment, 'Werter. Are you not ſenſible that 'you are deceiving yourſelf, that you 'are ruſhing on voluntary deſtruction? 'Why muſt I be the ſole object of your 'deſires; I, who belong to another? I 'fear, Werter, I very much fear, that 'your wiſh to poſſeſs me owes it's chief 'force to the impoſſibility of attain'ment.' He withdrew his hand; and, with a ſtedfaſt look of diſcontent, exclaimed—'Prudence! Prudence it'ſelf! Pray, did Albert ſupply you 'with this wiſe obſervation? It was 'politick, very politick.'—'It is a very 'natural obſervation for any one to 'make,' ſaid Charlotte—'and is there,

* This alludes to a cuſtom which prevails in Germany, of concealing a tree, thus embelliſhed, every Chriſtmas Eve, in ſome ſecret aperture, for the purpoſe of agreeably ſurpriſing the children, by diſcovering it to their view at a time when they leaſt expect it.

'then,

'then, no woman in the world capable 'of rendering you happy? If you will 'but take the trouble of ſearching, I'll 'anſwer for your ſucceſs. The ſolitude 'to which, for ſome time paſt, you 'have devoted yourſelf, inſpires me 'with the moſt ſerious concern both for 'your health and welfare. A journey 'would tend to diſſipate your ideas; let 'me entreat you to take one. Find an 'object worthy your affection; then re-'turn, and let us mutually enjoy that 'happineſs which the moſt perfect 'friendſhip can afford.'—'That was a 'very pretty ſpeech,' ſaid Werter, with a ſneer, 'and deſerves to be printed for 'the peruſal of every pedagogue. My 'dear Charlotte, allow me but a li tle 'time, and all will be well.'—'Only 'grant me one requeſt, Werter—not to 'come again before Chriſtmas Eve.' He was about to anſwer, when Albert came in. They ſaluted each other with the utmoſt coolneſs, and then walked up and down the room, with evident embarraſſment. Werter began a converſation that had no meaning, and which he ſoon dropped. Albert aſked his wife about ſeveral commiſſions with which he had entruſted her; and finding they were not executed, made uſe of ſome harſh expreſſions, which pierced Werter to the very ſoul. He wiſhed much to go, but had not power to ſtir; and remained in this ſituation till eight o'clock, during which time their mutual ill-humour continued; till at length the ſervant came to lay the cloth for ſupper, when Werter took up his hat and cane, while Albert very coolly aſked him to ſtay.

He returned home; and, taking the candle from his ſervant, went up to his room alone: there he wept bitterly, talked to himſelf with great earneſtneſs, and walked about for ſome time in a violent agitation. At length he threw himſelf on the bed; where his ſervant found him about eleven o'clock, when he ventured to go into the room, and aſk him whether he would not have his boots taken off. He ſuffered him to do it, and ordered him not to come into his room in the morning till he rang.

In the morning of Monday the twenty-firſt of December, he wrote the following letter; which was found, ſealed, on his bureau, after his death; and was delivered to Charlotte. I ſhall give it in fragments, in the ſame order in which, from ſeveral circumſtances, it appears to have been written.

'CHARLOTTE, I am reſolved 'to die! This is no haſty reſolution, no ſudden tranſport of romantick rage. I tell it you, with all the 'calmneſs of perfect reſignation, on the 'very morning of that day on which I 'am to ſee you for the laſt time. Ere 'you read this, deareſt of women! the 'ſilent grave will have incloſed the cold 'remains of the unhappy Werter, whoſe 'ſublimeſt pleaſure, in the laſt moments 'of his life, was to converſe with you. 'I have paſſed a dreadful night; or, 'rather, a ſalutary night, ſince it has 'diſpelled my doubts, and fixed my 'wavering reſolution. When I tore 'myſelf from you yeſterday, my heart 'was almoſt broken; I felt a deadly 'cold diffuſe itſelf over my ſenſes, at 'the idea of thoſe ſorrowful moments 'which I had paſſed in your preſence, 'uncheared by a ſingle ray of hope. 'I had ſcarcely ſtrength to reach my 'room, where I threw myſelf on my 'knees; and Heaven granted me, as the 'laſt conſolation, the power of ſhedding 'tears of anguiſh. A thouſand furious 'ſchemes divided my tortured ſoul; all 'of which ſoon centered in one favour-'ite thought—"I will die." I went to 'bed; and, when I awoke in the morn-'ing, refreſhed by the wholeſome balm 'of ſleep, ſtill was that reſolution deeply 'engraven on my heart—"I will die!" 'It is not deſpair; it is a certainty that 'I have compleated my career, and that 'I muſt ſacrifice myſelf to thy tranquillity. Yes, Charlotte; why conceal 'it? One of the three muſt periſh—Be 'it Werter. Oh my life! this breaſt, 'under the influence of ungovernable 'paſſion, has often entertained the horrid 'idea of murdering your huſband—'you—myſelf! Myſelf?—then be it 'ſo. When, in a fine ſummer's even-'ing, you climb to the top of yonder 'lofty mountain, remember how often 'you have ſeen me traverſe the vale be-'neath: then look towards the church-'yard, and obſerve how the wind waves 'the high graſs that bends over my 'tomb, gliſtening with the laſt rays of 'the ſun.——I was calm when I began 'to write; but now theſe loved images 'affect me ſo powerfully, that I weep 'like a child!'

About

About ten in the morning Werter called his ſervant: and, as he was dreſſing, told him that he was going to take a journey, and ſhould be abſent ſome days; that he muſt therefore pack up his cloaths. He likewiſe ordered him to call in what bills were owing; to fetch ſome books that he had lent; and pay two months in advance to ſome poor people to whom he made a weekly allowance. He paſſed the morning in his room; and, after dinner, went to the ſteward's, whom he did not find at home. He walked about the garden with a penſive air, and ſeemed anxious to recal to his mind all the ideas that were capable of augmenting his ſorrow.

The children did not ſuffer him to remain long alone: they all ran to meet him; and told him, as they ſkipped about him, that when to-morrow, and then to-morrow, and then one other day, was paſſed, they ſhould receive their Chriſtmas-gift from Charlotte; and related all the wonderful things they expected to meet with. 'To-morrow, 'and to-morrow, and then another day!' exclaimed Werter. He kiſſed them all with tenderneſs; and was going to leave them, when the youngeſt ſtopped him, to whiſper in his ear, that his eldeſt brother had written ſome fine compliments for the New Year; that there was one for papa, another for Albert and Charlotte, and another for Mr. Werter; and that they were all to be preſented on New Year's Day in the morning. This was more than he could bear: he gave ſomething to each of the children, left his compliments to their father, mounted his horſe, and rode off with tears in his eyes.

About five o'clock he returned home; ordered his ſervant to keep up the fire; told him to pack up his books and linen at the bottom of the trunk, and to lay his cloaths at top. He then, probably, wrote the following paragraph of his laſt letter to Charlotte.

'You do not expect me. You think 'that I ſhall obey you, and not call on 'you before Chriſtmas-eve—Oh, Char-'lotte! to-day, or never!—On Chriſt-'mas-eve you will hold this paper in 'your hand; and, trembling, moiſten 'it with your tears. I will have it ſo— 'it muſt be ſo!—Oh! how happy I am 'that my reſolution is fixed!'

At half paſt ſix he went to Albert's, and found Charlotte alone. She was greatly alarmed at ſeeing him. She had told her huſband, in the courſe of converſation, that Werter would not be there before Chriſtmas-eve; in conſequence of which, he had ordered his horſes to be immediately ſaddled; telling her, that he was going to tranſact ſome buſineſs with an agent in the neighbourhood. Charlotte, who knew that he had poſtponed this viſit for a long time, becauſe it would detain him a whole night from home, now perceived but too plainly his motive for delaying it; and ſhe was moſt ſenſibly affected at his want of confidence in her.

She was ſitting alone: her heart was oppreſſed with grief. She took a retroſpective view of her paſt life, in which ſhe could find no ſubject for reproach. She had a ſincere affection for her huſband; who, inſtead of that happineſs which he had promiſed her, now began to open to her a proſpect of miſery. Her thoughts next ſtrayed to Werter, whom ſhe blamed, but could not hate. A ſecret charm had attached her to him from the very commencement of their acquaintance: and now, after ſo long an intimacy, after the variety of ſcenes and ſituations they had experienced together, he had made an impreſſion on her heart that nothing but death could eraſe. Her oppreſſed boſom was at length relieved by a flood of tears; and, the violence of her grief having ſubſided, gave way to a ſoft but dangerous melancholy, which ſhe was indulging, when, to her great ſurprize, ſhe heard Werter on the ſtairs, aſking if ſhe was at home. It was too late to order herſelf to be denied, and ſhe had not recovered her confuſion when he entered the room. 'You have not obſerved 'your promiſe,' ſaid ſhe. 'I made no 'promiſe,' replied he. 'You ought, 'at leaſt,' ſaid Charlotte, 'to have 'complied with a requeſt that was only 'dictated by a regard for our mutual 'tranquillity.' When ſhe had ſaid this, ſhe ſent to ſome of her acquaintance, to requeſt they would come and paſs the evening with her: not only that they might be witneſſes to the converſation; but from the idea that Werter, in order to wait on them home, would be obliged to retire ſooner than he otherwiſe might. He had now brought her ſome books.

She

She aſked him for others; and endeavoured to introduce ſome general topicks of converſation, till the arrival of her friends ſhould relieve her from the embarraſſment: but the ſervant preſently returned, with different excuſes from them all.

This, for ſome minutes, diſconcerted her; but conſcious innocence ſoon inſpired her with a proper degree of pride. She deſpiſed the ſuſpicions of Albert; and the purity of her heart gave her ſo much confidence, that ſhe ſcornfully rejected the idea of calling in her maid, as ſhe had at firſt intended: but, after running over two or three tunes on her harpſichord, to recover her ſpirits, ſhe ſat down on the ſofa, with great compoſure, by the ſide of Werter. 'Have 'you nothing to read to me?' ſaid ſhe. 'Nothing.'—'If you will open that 'drawer, you will there find your own 'tranſlation of ſome of the Songs of 'Oſſian. I have not yet read it, as I 'waited to hear you read it yourſelf; 'but, for ſome time paſt, you have been 'fit for nothing.' Werter ſmiled, went to the drawer; and, as he took out the manuſcript, his eyes filled with tears. He ſat down, and began to read*. After reading for ſome time, he came to that affecting paſſage where Armin deplores the loſs of his beloved daughter—

'Alone, on the ſea-beat rock, my 'daughter was heard to complain. Fre'quent and loud were her cries; nor 'could her father afford her relief. All 'night I ſtood on the ſhore. I ſaw her 'by the faint light of the moon. All 'night I heard her complaints. Loud 'was the wind, and the rain beat hard 'on the mountain's ſide. Before morn'ing appeared, her voice was weak; it 'died away, like the evening breeze 'among the graſs on the rocks. Spent 'with grief, ſhe expired, and left thee, 'Armin, alone! Gone is my ſtrength 'in the war, and fallen my pride among 'women!

'When the ſtorms of the mountain 'come, when the north wind lifts the 'waves on high, I ſit by the ſounding 'ſhore, and look on the fatal rock. Often, 'by the ſetting moon, I ſee the ghoſts 'of my children. Half viewleſs, they 'walk in mournful converſe together. "Will none of you ſpeak, in pity?" 'They do not regard their father!—— 'I am ſad, O Carmor!—nor ſmall my 'cauſe of woe.'

A torrent of tears ſtreamed from the eyes of Charlotte, and gave ſome relief to her ſwelling boſom. Werter ſtopped, threw down the paper, ſeized one of her hands, and wept bitterly. She leaned her head on the other, and held her handkerchief to her eyes. They were both of them in the moſt violent agitation. They felt their own misfortunes in the fate of theſe heroes; they ſympathized with each other, and their tears were mingled. The eyes and lips of Werter were rivetted to her arm. She trembled, and made a faint effort to retire; but the force of her grief prevented her from moving. After ſome vain attempts to compoſe herſelf, ſhe begged him to proceed. The requeſt was urged with the voice of an angel! Werter, though his heart was almoſt burſting, took up the manuſcript; and, in broken accents, thus continued—

'Why doſt thou awake me, O Gale! 'It ſeems to ſay—"I am covered with "the drops of Heaven. The time of "my fading is near, and the blaſt that "ſhall ſcatter my leaves. To-morrow "ſhall the traveller come: he that ſaw "me in my beauty ſhall come; his "eyes will ſearch the field, but they "will not find me."

Theſe words were ſo applicable to the preſent ſituation of Werter, he felt them ſo forcibly, that his reaſon almoſt forſook him. He threw himſelf at Charlotte's feet in a tranſport of deſpair; and, ſeizing her hands, preſſed them to his eyes and forehead. A ſecret apprehenſion of his fatal deſign now entered the mind of Charlotte for the firſt time. Her ſenſes were bewildered. She preſſed his hands in hers, then preſſed them to her boſom; and, as ſhe gently inclined her head towards him, while her eyes beamed with the moſt tender and affectionate pity, her glowing cheek came in contact with his. They were now dead to every thing but to each other. He

* Reſpect for *Oſſian* has induced the French Tranſlator to omit ſeveral paſſages here introduced in the Original. The Engliſh Tranſlator has thought proper to follow his example; not from any reſpect to the *Author* of Oſſian, but merely that the ſtory may ſuffer no unneceſſary interruption.

claſped her in his arms, preſſed her to his heart, and imprinted a thouſand burning kiſſes on her trembling lips. At length, however, rouzed by the unbridled warmth of his careſſes, ſhe exclaimed, in a faint, ſupplicating tone—'Werter!' He continued. She then turned away her face; and, with a feeble hand, gently puſhed him from her; again repeating—'Werter!' But this ſecond admonition being equally diſregarded, ſhe called up her virtue to her aid; and, with a voice more firm and emphatick, once more exclaimed—'Werter!' The voice of Virtue proved irreſiſtible: Werter was awed; he ſuffered her to eſcape from his arms, and ſunk at her feet in an agony of grief. Charlotte roſe; and, as ſhe retired with trembling ſteps, in a voice of love blended with reſentment, ſaid—'This, Werter, is the laſt time: 'never ſhall you ſee me more!' Then caſting a look of the utmoſt tenderneſs on her unhappy lover, ſhe haſtened into her own apartment, and locked the door. Werter extended his arms towards her, but did not dare to detain her.

He was lying on the floor, with his head leaning on the ſofa; and remained in that poſture for more than half an hour, when he was rouzed by the noiſe of the maid, who came to lay the cloth for ſupper. He walked up and down the room till ſhe was gone; and then approaching the door of Charlotte's apartment, ſaid, in a low voice—'Char-'lotte! Charlotte! but one word more, 'one farewel!' He ſtopped, and liſtened—he entreated—then liſtened again: but, finding he could obtain no anſwer, tore himſelf from the place, exclaiming—'Adieu, Charlotte! Adieu, for ever!'

He went to the gate of the town: the guards knew him, and let him paſs. He did not reach home till near eleven. When he entered the houſe, his ſervant perceived he had no hat, but did not dare to ſay any thing; and, when he undreſſed him, he found his cloaths were wet through. His hat was afterwards found on the ſummit of a rock that was ſituated on the declivity of the mountain, and commanded an extenſive view of the valley. It is inconceivable how he could climb ſo ſteep a place, in ſuch a night, without falling down the precipice, and being daſhed to pieces.

He went to bed, and ſlept till late next day. When the ſervant went into his room in the morning, to take him his coffee, he found him writing the following part of his laſt letter to Charlotte—

'FOR the laſt, laſt time, I now open 'my eyes, obſcured by a thick, 'impenetrable miſt: they will no more 'behold the light.—Mourn, then, O 'Nature! Thy child, thy friend, thy 'beloved, draws near to his end! 'Charlotte, the ſenſations I experience, 'when I ſay to myſelf—"This morn-"ing is my laſt!"—though they per-'vade my whole frame, ſtill bear a ſtrong 'reſemblance to the uncertain vapour of 'a dream. "This morning is my laſt!" '*Laſt*, Charlotte? That word LAST 'conveys no fixed idea to my mind. 'Am I not here in the full poſſeſſion of 'my native ſtrength?—and, to-morrow, 'ſtretched, extended, ſleeping on the 'earth! To die—what does that mean? 'We only dream when we talk of death. 'I have ſeen many die; but, ſo circum-'ſcribed are the limits of the human 'mind, that it can form no conception 'either of the beginning or end of it's 'own exiſtence. At this moment I am 'maſter of myſelf; or, rather, I am 'thine, thine, deareſt of women! and, 'the next—ſeparated—diſunited—per-'haps, for ever! No, Charlotte; no. 'How can I ſuffer annihilation? How 'can you ſuffer annihilation? We cer-'tainly exiſt. Annihilation! what does 'it mean? This, too, is a mere word, 'a vain ſound, that conveys no fixed 'idea to my mind. Dead, Charlotte? '—buried in a dark, confined corner of 'the cold earth!

'I had formerly a friend who, in 'my early days, occupied my every 'thought. She died. I followed her 'hearſe, and ſtood by the ſide of her 'grave. I heard the cords creak as 'they let down the coffin. As the firſt 'ſhovel-full of earth was thrown upon 'it, I heard it return a hollow ſound, 'which became fainter and fainter till 'it was entirely covered! I then threw 'myſelf on the ground; my heart di-'ſtracted, rent with anguiſh.—But I 'knew not what I was, nor what I 'ſhould become. Death! Grave!—'I know not the meaning of theſe 'words.

'O forgive me! forgive me!—Yeſter-'day!—Alas! that moment ſhould have 'been the laſt of my life! Oh, my 'angel! for the firſt time did my ſoul 'then experience a pure ſenſation of

'unbounded

'unbounded joy—of joy unpolluted by 'doubt. Thou loveſt me, Charlotte—'yes, thou loveſt me! My lips ſtill 'glow with the ſacred fire they imbibed 'from thine! My heart is endued with 'freſh vigour. Forgive me! forgive 'me!

'Oh! I knew that I was beloved! 'Thy firſt looks, the firſt preſſure of 'thy hand, convinced me of the pleaſ-'ing truth: and yet, when I was abſent 'from thee, or when I ſaw Albert at 'thy ſide, my mind again became a 'prey to doubts and fears.

'Do you remember the flowers you 'ſent me, at that fatal aſſembly where 'you had no opportunity of ſpeaking a 'ſingle word to me, or even of giving 'me your hand? Alas! I conſidered 'them as the ſacred pledge of your 'affection, and paſſed half the night on 'my knees before them! But theſe 'impreſſions were, by degrees effaced, 'like the gratitude of a Chriſtian for the 'bounty of his Creator. Such things 'are tranſitory; but a whole eternity 'will be inſufficient to extinguiſh the 'flame that I yeſterday caught from 'your lips, and which I ſtill feel in my 'heart.——She loves me! Theſe arms 'have encircled her waiſt!—Theſe lips 'have trembled on hers!—This mouth 'has caught the murmuring ſighs juſt 'iſſuing from her own! She is mine! '—Yes, Charlotte, thou art mine for 'ever!

'Albert is your huſband—what then? 'Huſband! That's a title confined to 'this world; like the ſin which I com-'mit in loving you, in wiſhing to force 'you from his arms. A Sin! Well, 'be it ſo—I take the puniſhment upon 'myſelf. It is a ſin that has afforded 'me the pureſt extacy, that has ſhed a 'ſalutary balſam on my drooping ſoul. 'From this moment, Charlotte, you are 'mine! I go before you—I go to join 'my Father—to join thy Father. At 'his throne will I pour forth my ſorrows, 'and he will give me conſolation till 'you arrive. Then will I fly to meet 'you; and, claſping you to my boſom, 'remain for ever united to you in the 'preſence of the Eternal!

'I do not dream—I do not rave! 'My mind receives new light as I ap-'proach the grave. We ſhall exiſt 'hereafter!—We ſhall ſee each other 'again!—We ſhall ſee thy mother! I 'ſhall ſee her, and pour out my whole 'heart before her—before thy mother, 'thy perfect image!'

About eleven o'clock Werter aſked his ſervant whether Albert was returned. He told him he was, for that he had ſeen him ride by. Upon which Werter gave him the following note unſealed, and bade him carry it to his houſe—

'I Am going to take a journey. Will 'you be kind enough to lend me 'your piſtols? Adieu.'

Charlotte had paſſed a reſtleſs night; her pulſe beat high; and her mind was agitated by a thouſand different ſentiments. The ardour of Werter's paſſionate embraces, in ſpite of her utmoſt efforts, had made a deep impreſſion on her breaſt. At the ſame time, the days of her innocence and tranquillity, of that happy confidence which no cares alloyed, preſented themſelves to her mind with added charms. She dreaded the looks of her huſband, and the pointed irony of his queſtions, when he ſhould hear of Werter's viſits. She had never learnt to diſſemble; no falſhood had ever iſſued from her lips; but ſhe now found herſelf conſtrained to have recourſe to equivocation. The repugnance, the embarraſſment ſhe experienced, made her fault appear of greater magnitude; and yet ſhe could neither hate the author of it, nor reſolve to ſee him no more. She wept till the approach of morning, when ſhe ſunk, through fatigue, into a faint ſlumber; from which ſhe had ſcarcely awakened, and had time to dreſs herſelf, before her huſband arrived. His preſence, for the firſt time, became irkſome to her: ſhe trembled leſt he ſhould perceive, by her looks, that ſhe had paſſed the night in tears; and the anxiety ſhe experienced on this account increaſed her diſtreſs. She accordingly received him with an eager embrace, that rather betrayed confuſion and remorſe than expreſſed any real ſatisfaction. Albert obſerved it; and, after opening ſome letters and parcels that had arrived in his abſence, dryly aſked her, whether ſhe had heard any news, or had received any viſits, ſince he had been gone? 'Werter,' ſaid ſhe, 'called yeſterday, and paſſed 'an hour with me.'—'His viſits are 'generally well-timed,' ſaid Albert, and

retired into his own apartment. Charlotte remained alone for ſome minutes. The preſence of a huſband ſhe both loved and eſteemed, gave a new turn to her thoughts. His kindneſs, his generous diſpoſition, his affection for her, all recurred to her mind; and ſhe reproached herſelf for having made him ſo ill a return. A ſecret impulſe urged her to follow him: ſhe therefore took her work with her; and, entering his room, aſked him if he wanted any thing. He anſwered—'No;' and ſat himſelf down to write. She took a chair herſelf, and began to work. They paſſed half an hour in this manner; during which time Albert frequently roſe from his ſeat, to walk up and down the room, but would give little or no anſwer to the queſtions that Charlotte put to him. This conduct rendered her very uneaſy, and her anxiety was conſiderably increaſed by her attempts to conceal it.

The arrival of Werter's ſervant threw her into the utmoſt confuſion. He gave Albert the note; who turned coolly to his wife, and ſaid—'Give him the piſ-'tols: I wiſh him a good journey.' Theſe words were like a thunderbolt to her. She roſe from her ſeat with a ſlow, feeble, tottering pace; walked to the wall; and, with trembling hands, took down the piſtols. She heſitated; wiped off the duſt; and would have longer delayed giving them, if Albert had not hurried her, by aſking, with a ſignificant look, what ſhe was waiting for? She at length gave the fatal arms to the ſervant, without being able to utter a ſingle word; and, as ſoon as he was gone, folded up her work, and retired to her apartment in a ſtate of mind that can be better conceived than expreſſed. Her heart foreboded the moſt dreadful calamities. Sometimes ſhe was on the point of returning to her huſband, to throw herſelf at his feet, acquaint him with every circumſtance of the preceding evening, confeſs her fault, and diſcloſe her apprehenſions. She thought that, by ſo doing, ſhe might at leaſt perſuade him to go to Werter. Soon, however, the advantage to be derived from the adoption of ſuch a meaſure diſappeared, and ſhe ſaw nothing but it's inconveniences. At length, the cloth was laid; and a friend, who had called in by chance, being prevailed on to ſtay dinner, helped to ſupport the converſation.

In the mean time, Werter's ſervant had carried the piſtols to his maſter; who received them with tranſport when he heard that Charlotte had delivered them with her own hands. Having ordered a roll and ſome wine to be brought him, he ſent his ſervant to dinner, and ſat down to write—

'THEY have paſſed through your 'hands; you have wiped the duſt 'from them. I kiſs them a thouſand 'times, for you have touched them. 'Heaven approves my deſign—and you, 'Charlotte, ſupply me with the means 'of accompliſhment. I ever wiſhed to 'receive my death from your hands, 'and from your hands am I now going 'to receive it. My ſervant tells me you 'trembled when you gave him the piſ-'tols; and yet did not bid me one fare-'wel. Wretch that I am!—Not one 'farewel! Can that bleſt moment 'which made me yours for ever, have 'deprived me of your eſteem? Char-'lotte, the impreſſion of that moment 'whole ages will be inadequate to efface! 'And it is impoſſible—I feel it is—that 'you ſhould hate the man who thus 'paſſionately loves you!'

After dinner, he told his ſervant to pack up every thing; tore a great number of papers, and went out to ſettle ſome trifling debts. He returned home; and then went out again, notwithſtanding the rain, firſt into the Count's garden, and then farther into the country, where he wandered about till duſk; when he again returned, and ſat down to write—

'MY friend, I have, for the laſt time, 'beheld the fields, the foreſt, and the 'ſky.—Adieu, my deareſt mother! Par-'don your unhappy ſon.—Conſole her 'griefs, my friend. God be with you! 'My affairs are all ſettled. Adieu! 'We ſhall meet again, and be happy.

'I Have ill repaid your friendſhip, Al-'bert, and you forgive me. I have 'interrupted the peace of your family, 'and excited ſuſpicion between you. 'Farewel! I am going to put an end 'to it all. O may my death remove 'every obſtacle to your happineſs!—'Albert! Albert! make that angel 'happy: and may the benedictions of 'Heaven be upon you!'

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He paſſed the evening in regulating his papers; many of which he burned; and others he ſealed up, and addreſſed to his friend: they contained ſome detached thoughts and aphoriſms; a part of which I have ſeen. About ten o'clock he ordered ſome wood to be put in the ſtove, and a pint of wine to be brought to him; and then diſmiſſed his ſervant, who, with the reſt of the family, lay in a diſtant part of the houſe. The ſervant lay down in his cloaths, that he might be ready betimes in the morning; for his maſter had told him that he had ordered the poſt-horſes to be at the door before ſix o'clock.

TO CHARLOTTE. IN CONTINUATION.

PAST ELEVEN O'CLOCK.

'ALL is calm around me, and my 'ſoul is ſerene.—I thank thee, 'O my God! for granting me this 'warmth and vigour in my laſt mo-'ments!

'I approach the window; and, through 'the ſtormy clouds, which are paſſing 'rapidly over my head, I deſcry a few 'ſolitary ſtars ſtill ſhining in the vaulted 'heavens.—No, celeſtial bodies, ye will 'not fall: the Eternal ſupports both you 'and me! I ſee the *Urſa Major*, the 'moſt glorious of all the conſtellations; 'which uſed to ſhine exactly oppoſite 'your door when I left you in an even-'ing. How often have I looked on it 'with rapture! how often raiſed my 'hands towards it, and invoked it to 'atteſt my happineſs!—Oh, Charlotte! 'is there a ſingle object that does not 'recal thee to mind? Am I not ſur-'rounded, as it were, by thee? and have 'I not, like a child, collected a thou-'ſand uſeleſs trifles, conſecrated by thy 'ſacred touch?

'Thy dear profile I bequeath to thee, 'Charlotte; and conjure thee to honour 'it. A thouſand, thouſand kiſſes, have 'I imprinted on it; and never have I 'entered or left my apartment without 'ſaluting it.

'I have written a note to your father, 'to beg he will afford protection to my 'body. In that corner of the church-'yard which is neareſt the fields, ſtand 'two lime-trees: there I wiſh to reſt. 'He has it in his power to do that for 'his friend, and I know he will do it. 'Join your entreaties to mine. Perhaps 'devout Chriſtians would not chuſe to 'have their bones depoſited near thoſe 'of a poor wretch like me. Alas! I 'could wiſh to be interred in the lonely 'vale, or in the high road, that the 'Prieſt and the Levite might paſs by 'my tomb, and croſs themſelves; and 'the Samaritan give a tear to my fate.

'Charlotte! I hold with a firm hand 'the fatal inſtrument of death! You 'preſent it, and I receive it without 'trembling. All the wiſhes, all the 'hopes of my life, are fulfilled!

'Why was the ſatisfaction of dying 'for you, Charlotte; of ſacrificing my-'ſelf for you; denied me? Could I but 'reſtore peace and happineſs to your 'boſom, with what joy, with what 'rapture, ſhould I meet my fate! But 'to a choſen few only is allotted the 'privilege of dying for thoſe that are 'dear to them, and thus increaſing 'their happineſs.

'I wiſh, Charlotte, to be buried in 'the cloaths I now wear. You have 'touched them, and rendered them ſa-'cred. This is a favour I have like-'wiſe requeſted of your father. My 'ſoul hovers over the grave! They 'muſt not look in my pockets for the 'roſe-coloured bow which you wore on 'your breaſt the firſt time I ſaw you, 'ſurrounded by your children.—Dear 'children! how they crouded about me! 'Give them a thouſand kiſſes, and tell 'them the fate of their unhappy friend. 'Ah! from that moment, how firmly 'was I attached to you!—attached by 'ties that not even Death can diſſolve! 'The ribband muſt be buried with me. 'You gave it me on my birth-day. 'With what joy did I receive it! Alas, 'little did I reflect on the conſequences! '—Be at peace: I conjure you, be at 'peace!'——

'They are loaded—The clock ſtrikes 'twelve—Then be it ſo.——Charlotte! 'Charlotte! Farewel! Farewel!'

One of the neighbours ſaw the flaſh, and heard the exploſion; but, every thing remaining quiet, he thought no more of it.

The next morning, about ſix o'clock, Werter's ſervant went into the room with a candle. He found his maſter extended on the floor, and weltering in his blood. He took him up in his arms, and ſpoke to

to him, but received no anſwer. He firſt ran to the ſurgeon, and then to Albert's. Charlotte heard the bell ring. An univerſal tremor ſeized her limbs. She awaked her huſband, and they both got up. The ſervant, all in tears, imparted the dreadful news. Charlotte fell, ſenſeleſs, at the feet of Albert.

When the ſurgeon arrived, he found the unhappy Werter ſtill lying on the floor. His pulſe continued to beat; all his limbs were convulſed. The ball had entered his ſcull above the right eye, and part of his brains had iſſued from the wound. The ſurgeon opened a vein in his arm: he bled, and ſtill continued to breathe.

It was ſuppoſed, from the blood round his chair, that he had committed this raſh deed as he was ſitting at his bureau; and that he afterwards fell on the floor. He was found, lying on his back, near the window. He was dreſſed in a blue frock and yellow waiſtcoat, and had his boots on.

Every body in the houſe and neighbourhood, and, in ſhort, people from all parts of the town, flocked to ſee him. Albert came in. Werter was laid on the bed, with his head bound up; and the pallid languor of death was apparent in every feature. His limbs were motionleſs. Some faint ſigns of life yet remained, but he was every moment expected to expire. He had only drank one glaſs of his wine. Emilia Galotti was lying open upon his bureau.

I ſhall paſs over in ſilence the deep diſtreſs of Albert, and Charlotte's deſpair.

As ſoon as the old ſteward heard of the dreadful event, he rode full ſpeed to the houſe. He embraced his dying friend, and wept bitterly. His eldeſt boys ſoon followed him on foot. They threw themſelves on their knees by the ſide of Werter's bed, and kiſſed his hands and face in an agony of grief. The eldeſt, who had always been his favourite, hung on his lips till he breathed his laſt; and, even then, they were obliged to employ force to remove him.

At twelve Werter expired. The preſence and authority of the ſteward prevented any tumult. About eleven, that ſame night, he was buried in the very ſpot he had choſen himſelf. The ſteward and his ſons followed him to the grave. Albert was not able to attend. Charlotte's life was in imminent danger. The body was borne by labourers; and no prieſt attended the funeral.

FINIS.